

NASH NEXT CHALLENGE SPECIAL | **BILL ANDERSON**'s lost guitar found!

NASH Country Weekly

COUNTRY FOR LIFE | SEPTEMBER 21, 2015

**HELL OF
A NIGHT
DUSTIN
LYNCH's**
first
headlining
tour

**SAM HUNT
REVEALS
HIS FIRST
TIMES**

FALL PREVIEW

BLAKE RETURNS

**PLUS 20 MORE
THINGS TO LOOK
FORWARD TO
THIS FALL!**

**JERROD
NIEMANN**
pays
tribute
to fans

**ELI YOUNG
BAND** joins
forces with
**ANDY
GRAMMER**

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38>



NEW MUSIC!

Catching
up with
**SAMMY
KERSHAW**

A portrait of Brett Eldredge, a man with short brown hair and a light beard, wearing a dark purple button-down shirt with white polka dots and dark jeans. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is a dark, textured map of Illinois.

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**1997 SATURDAY,
SEPT. 20**



Opry Cashes Paycheck

JOHNNY PAYCHECK, best known for singing “Take This Job and Shove It,” wasn’t about to turn down this gig. During his appearance at the Grand Ole Opry on Sept. 20, 1997, Johnny was asked an important question by the Opry’s general manager, Bob Whittaker—would he want to become a member of the Opry cast? “Yes, in a New York minute!” was Johnny’s reply. The honor was a long time coming, but perhaps partly due to Johnny’s checkered past. He had served a prison term during the 1980s and later admitted to alcohol and drug problems. But he told CNN in the late ’90s that he had put his life in order, which likely led to the offer of Opry membership. In addition to “Take This Job and Shove It,” Johnny recorded such hits as “She’s All I Got,” “Someone to Give My Love To” and “I’m the Only Hell (Mama Ever Raised).” As his health began to deteriorate, Johnny was able to make only brief stage appearances. Johnny died on Feb. 19, 2003, from complications of emphysema.

2015



**SEPT. 14:
BIG MAC**
MAC McANALLY, accomplished songwriter and CMA award-winning musician, is releasing his own album of originals, A.K.A. *Nobody*, on Sept. 14.

SEPT. 15-20: GOING AMERICANA

The Americana Music Festival and Conference in Nashville, Sept. 15-20, features more than 160 live performances in nine different venues around the city. The big performance night takes place on Sept. 19 at Nashville’s

recently opened Ascend Amphitheater, featuring **LORETTA LYNN, STEVE EARLE, NIKKI LANE, GILLIAN WELCH** and many others.



SEPT. 18: PRIME TIME HONKY-TONK

Two titans of traditional country, **MOE BANDY** and **GENE WATSON**, are set to perform their classic hits on the RFD-TV special, *The Gene & Moe Show*, on Sept. 18, at 9 p.m. ET.



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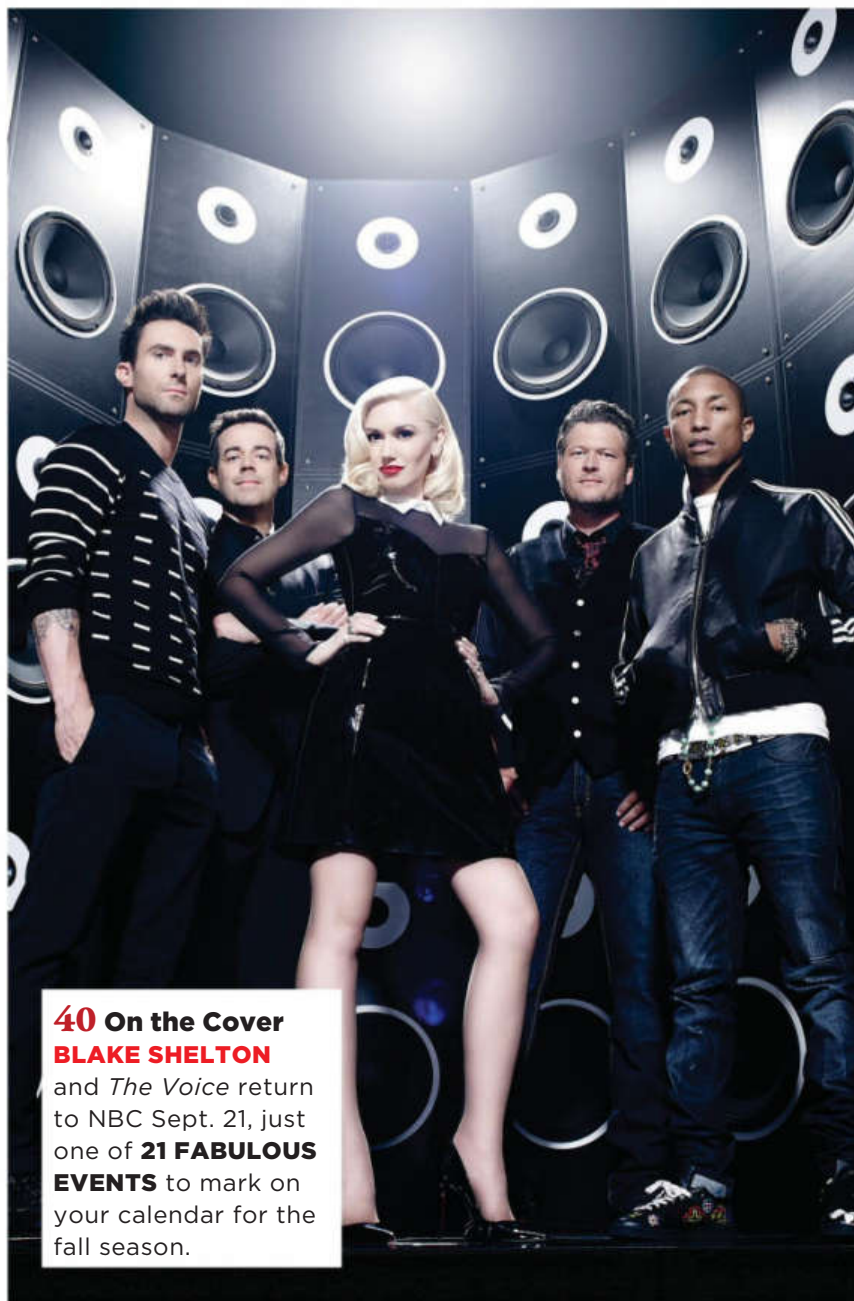
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BLAKE SHELTON

and *The Voice* return to NBC Sept. 21, just one of **21 FABULOUS EVENTS** to mark on your calendar for the fall season.

PLUS!



27 The NASH NEXT TALENT COMPETITION

is heating up, and you can be part of the fun. Find out how you can help choose the country star of the future. Plus, meet the new NASH Next judge who knows a thing or two about discovering great talent.



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WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Nash Country Weekly's **2015 Reader Survey!**

Everyone who completes the survey will be automatically entered in a drawing to win a trip for two to Nashville to attend the CMA Awards on Nov. 4, 2015.



WEDNESDAY NOV 4 8|7c 

To get started, visit countryweekly.com/readersurvey



FROM THE EDITOR



Dear Readers,

There is a lot to look forward to in country music this fall, and we wanted to make it easy for you to know what is just around the corner. So in this issue we are presenting you with our Fall Preview. Many big events are ahead, from the return of Blake Shelton and *The Voice* and the CMA Awards to Carrie Underwood's new album and Luke Bryan's highly anticipated Farm Tour. From nuts to bolts, we have it all for you. So check

out our cover story and start making your plans for fall.

In our Nash Next section, we give you an in-depth look at the Nash Next challenge. If you are not familiar with these challenges, take a look at our story to find out how you can be involved in picking our next country radio star. Nash Next has also announced a surprise guest judge, who will be joining the three original judges, and many challenges for the contestants to compete in. Don't miss our Nash Next section, in which we take you step by step through the competition.

We have a great issue this week, with stories on Eli Young Band, Dustin Lynch, Jerrod Niemann, Cassadee Pope, Sammy Kershaw, Bill Anderson and so much more.

Don't miss next week's issue, on stands Sept. 21, as we take a look at the 50-year careers of Willie, Merle and Loretta.

SEE YOU NEXT WEEK!

LISA KONICKI, EDITOR IN CHIEF

FROM THE READER



Shoot us an email, a comment or a tweet and let us know what you think!

Letters, Nash Country Weekly, 506 2nd. Ave. South, Suite 200, Nashville, TN 37210

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Please include your name, address and daytime phone number with all correspondence. Nash Country Weekly assumes no responsibility for returning unsolicited material, including, but not limited to, photographs, artwork, manuscripts and letters. Letters may be edited for clarity and length.

JOEY+PRAYERS

My heartfelt prayers and thoughts go out to the Feek family. Joey is one of the sweetest and most humble women in country music. I watch *The Joey+Rory Show* each week and watched the episode when their precious daughter, Indiana, was born. I also watched when Rory announced that Indiana was born with Down syndrome. May the good Lord bless and keep the Feek family in his loving care.

DELLA HOOVER | Haskell, Okla.

BIRTHDAY WISHES

So happy to see the birthdays back in the magazine! Great magazine!

CAROLYN OUTRAM | Belleville, Ontario

TWITTER

Thank you @countryweekly for a great article @oakridgeboys @wlgolden #luckygirl

SIMONE STALEY | @SimoneStaley

God bless @countryweekly for these new @ScottyMcCreery pictures

JORDANN | @McCreery02

@ScottyMcCreery is most definitely a "whole lot of handsome!!" @country-weekly

SHARON JILES | @sharonjiles

@countryweekly @KipMooreMusic I just love this guy and how he lives his life! Totally REAL through and through!

MELISSA CORDER | @melissa_corder

FACEBOOK

Thank you for paying such great honor to the memory of this country legend! [Lynn Anderson, *A Tribute to the "Rose Garden" Icon*, Aug. 31.] Her life was a true country song: rough roads at times, finally finding a true cowboy to ride the journey out with and a love for people and for country music. She could move the hearts of those who loved her because they believed her when she sang—that cry in her voice that said "I've been there," and her final message [that] it will be OK—there's hope! She was an amazing, trailblazing, inspiring and all-around awesome lady! And we will never forget that!

KHRISTOPHER JORDAN TAYLOR

An article on Kip Moore—sweet! I'll be getting this one for sure! Thanks, Country Weekly.

PHYLLIS ANN WINKLE

Got mine yesterday! Love it when Keith U's on the cover!!!

TAMMY FELTS BERKEY

Guess I'll be picking up this copy. Mmmmm, Keith Urban. He is one fine-looking Aussie.

KAREN ORCHARD

ALABAMA

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FIRST TAKE

DADDY'S LITTLE GIRL

Tim McGraw performs "Here Tonight" with his daughter Gracie during a stop on the Shotgun Rider Tour at Bridgestone Arena in Nashville.





THE COUNTRY BREW

A SWEET TASTE OF ALL THINGS COUNTRY

Opening Act



FARM FRESH

It's a special landmark year for Farm Aid, the annual benefit concert dedicated to helping America's family farms continue to thrive.

WILLIE NELSON and his fellow Farm Aid organizers **NEIL YOUNG** and **JOHN MELLENCAMP** will mark Farm Aid's 30th anniversary with their all-star concert on Sept. 19 at the FirstMerit Bank Pavilion in downtown Chicago. Joining the three legends will be **KACEY MUSGRAVES**, **JAMEY JOHNSON**, **OLD CROW MEDICINE SHOW**, **DAVE MATTHEWS** and many others. Willie, Neil and John organized the first Farm Aid concert in 1985 to raise awareness about the loss of family farms as well as raise money for American farmers. The inaugural show was held Sept. 22, 1985, at Memorial Stadium in Champaign, Ill.

photo by Brian Hine/Corbis



(Clockwise from left) **THE FORCE IS STRONG WITH THIS ONE** Luke Bryan does his best jedi mind trick to levitate his mic during his performance on *Good Morning America*; **COLORFUL CHARACTERS** Ricky Schroder and Jennifer Nettles, who will star in the upcoming movie *Coat of Many Colors*, share a laugh during a press tour in August; **OFFICE SPACE** It's a good day at the office when (from left) Joe Walsh, Sheryl Crow, Vince Gill and composer/producer Steve Jordan show up; **DOUBLE TROUBLE** *Pretty Little Liars* star Lucy Hale (right) got a chance to meet A-lister Salma Hayek at the AOL Studios in New York City.



(Right) **BOMB'S AWAY** The Band Perry photobombs themselves before their *Good Morning America* performance; (below) **I LIKE THE WAY YOU TALK** Thomas Rhett (right) gives actor/musician Billy Bob Thornton a thumbs-up after they both performed at the Grand Ole Opry; (bottom) **HEAD STRONG** Looks like Old Dominion's stadium tour with Kenny Chesney has gone to their heads.



(Above) **DOUBLE DOWN** You can bet that (from left) Chuck Wicks, JT Hodges and Joe Don Rooney are having a good time; (below) **RIDE THE RIDES** Joe Nichols and his daughter Dylan can attest that Disneyland is the happiest place on earth.



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**NASH Country
Weekly**

COUNTRY FOR LIFE



(From left) Charlie, Natalie Stovall and Tucker Yochim

CHARLIE DANIELS' VOLUNTEER JAM The stars came out in full force for the 40th anniversary of Charlie Daniels' Volunteer Jam at Nashville's Bridgestone Arena in August, including (above, from left) Lynyrd Skynyrd's Mark Matejka and Rickey Medlocke, Charlie, and Skynyrd's Gary Rossington and Johnny Colt.



(From left) Colt Ford, Billy Dean and Phil Vassar



Alabama's Randy Owen



Craig Morgan (left) and Nashville's Charles Esten



Blackberry Smoke's Charlie Starr

(From left) Jimmy Hall, Lee Roy Parnell and Bill Crain



Charlie accepts a \$100,000 check from the Henry Rifles company on behalf of his Journey Home Project, a non-profit that connects donors to veterans organizations.

background photos by Rick Diamond/Webster PR & Getty Images; portrait photos by John Shearer/Webster PR & Getty Images



WWII vet Jack ten Napel celebrates his 95th birthday at the Jam.



Charlie (left) and Eric Church



Jamey Johnson



Travis Tritt



(From left) Lee Greenwood, Charlie and Jeannie Seely

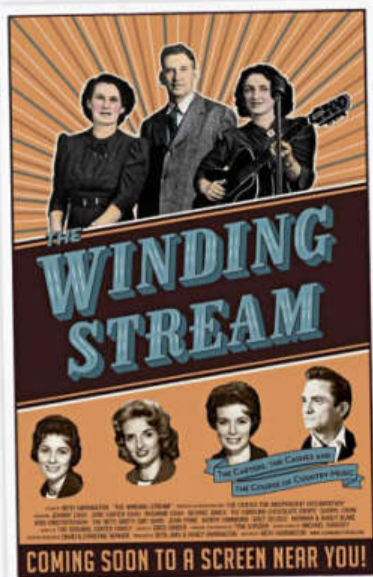
BARK TO THE BASICS

MIRANDA LAMBERT has a passion for pups . . . and kittens . . . and horses . . . and almost anything four-legged and furry, and this year she and her MuttNation Foundation family are celebrating the 8th annual Cause for the Paws: Back to Basics event. The combination concert and fundraiser takes place on Sept. 18 and 19 in Luckenbach, Texas. Joining Ran and her mom, Bev, who spearheads the event, are singer/songwriters **JON RANDALL** ("Whiskey Lullaby"), **JESSI ALEXANDER** ("Drink on It"), **RADNEY FOSTER** ("Raining on Sunday") and **GWEN SEBASTIAN** from *The Voice*. Last fall, Miranda's MuttNation Foundation opened Redemption Ranch, a five-acre safe haven for animals in crisis.



5 CHASE RICE FUN FACTS

- 1** Chase bought a 1985 Chevy Silverado to commemorate his first single, "Ready Set Roll," being RIAA Certified Platinum.
- 2** Chase founded an apparel line, Head Down Eyes Up, to help motivate him to stay focused.
- 3** When Chase isn't on the road, his favorite thing to do is go to his farm and shoot his guns.
- 4** Chase's favorite drink is Jack Daniel's straight or with a splash of Coke.
- 5** While on tour, Chase works out and runs the stadium steps and parking lots before his shows.



FAMILY AFFAIR

After spending more than a year on the film festival circuit, a documentary about **THE CARTER FAMILY** will be coming to theaters near you this fall. *The Winding Stream: The Carters, the Cashes and the Course of Country Music* honors the legacy and music of the Carters, who were led by A.P. Carter, wife Sara and sister-in-law Maybelle. The film's soundtrack, which will be released on Oct. 16, includes songs by **GEORGE JONES**, **JOHN PRINE**, the **NITTY GRITTY DIRT BAND** and **KRIS KRISTOFFERSON**, among others.

NEWS of NOTE



IN MEMORY

BOB JOHNSTON, legendary record producer who worked with such stars as Bob Dylan and Johnny Cash, died on Aug. 14 at a Nashville hospice facility at age 83. Bob produced the albums *At San Quentin* and *At Folsom Prison* for Johnny and Bob Dylan's landmark *Blonde on Blonde* album, among many others. His work is featured in the current exhibit at the Country Music Hall of Fame

and Museum in Nashville, *Dylan, Cash and the Nashville Cats: A New Music City*.



TV TALK

STEVEN TYLER, lead singer for Aerosmith, who's currently working on a country music album, will make a guest appearance on an upcoming episode of the ABC-TV series *Nashville*. The new season of *Nashville* premieres on Sept. 23.

T.G. SHEPPARD

and his wife, singer Kelly Lang, will give fans a glimpse



BABY NEWS

KELLY CLARKSON announced that she was pregnant with her second child during a concert in Los Angeles on Aug. 19. Kelly and husband Brandon Blackstock have one daughter, River Rose, born in June 2014.

of their stylish Nashville home on NBC's *Open House* series. The show will air in large market cities on Sept. 13 and 14 and be syndicated to all NBC affiliates across the nation on Oct. 4.

FESTIVALS

The owners and organizers of the annual Bonnaroo Music and Arts Festival are discussing the possibility of bringing a country music-themed festival to the Bonnaroo site in Manchester, Tenn. The proposed new festival would be in addition to Bonnaroo.

London Bridge

Though country music is a thoroughly American invention, the folks across the pond in the U.K. love it as well. A whole scene of artists playing their own expression of country has popped up there, and so has the



BRITISH COUNTRY MUSIC AWARDS to honor those artists' work. This year's awards takes place on Oct. 25 at the Concorde Suite, Heathrow, London. Here are some of the top nominees, including American artists in the international categories.

ENTERTAINER OF THE YEAR

The Shires
Ward Thomas
Nathan Carter
Raymond Froggatt
Raintown

U.K. SONG OF THE YEAR

Luke & Mel
"Something About a Woman"
The Shires
"Made in England"
Honey Ryder
"Born in a Bottle"
Laura Oakes
"Snakes and Ladders"

Carolynne Poole
"I Love You but Shut Up"

INTERNATIONAL SONG OF THE YEAR

Toby Keith
"35 Mph Town"
Brandy Clark
"Stripes"
Little Big Town
"Girl Crush"
Miranda Lambert
"Little Red Wagon"
Darius Rucker
"Homegrown Honey"
**INTERNATIONAL
ALBUM OF THE YEAR**
Striking Matches
Nothing but the Silence

Lee Ann Womack
The Way I'm Livin'

Reba McEntire
Love Somebody
Brandy Clark
12 Stories
Darius Rucker
Southern Style

INTERNATIONAL ACT OF THE YEAR

Luke Bryan
Striking Matches
Brandy Clark
Lee Ann Womack
Darius Rucker

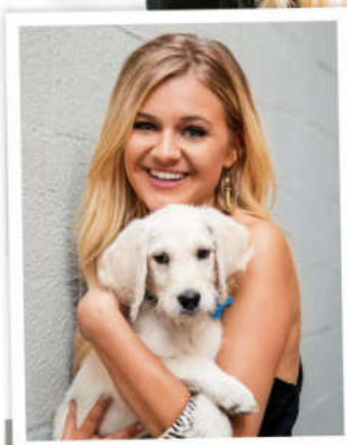
DREAMING BIG

KELSEA BALLERINI
“LOVE ME LIKE YOU MEAN IT”
NO. 1 PARTY

There were few dry eyes in the packed house when **KELSEA BALLERINI** finished her thank-you speeches at her No. 1 party for “Love Me Like You Mean It” on Aug. 10. The crowd stood practically shoulder-to-shoulder, unusual for a No. 1 soiree in Nashville, as Kelsea celebrated the song’s success with co-writers Josh Kerr, Lance Carpenter and Forest Glen Whitehead. “Love Me Like You Mean It” marked the first No. 1 for all four writers, as well as Kelsea’s first as an artist. Kelsea also became the first female solo artist to hit No. 1 with a debut single since Carrie Underwood and “Jesus, Take the Wheel” in 2006.

As such, the plaques and platitudes were met with emotional speeches and teary-eyed thank-yous. “This is a room full of dreamers,” Kelsea began, before tears welled up in her eyes. “And being dreamers, you look forward a lot. You look forward to goals that you set and you look forward to your first No. 1.”

Following the ASCAP party, folks headed over to Kelsea’s label, Black River Entertainment, for another celebratory bash with plenty of pizza and beverages on hand.



(Left) Kelsea and her dog, Dibs, were all smiles, as were songwriters (below, from left) Forest Glen Whitehead, Josh Kerr, Kelsea and Lance Carpenter.



Kelsea perf & pup by Anise Stubbs; Kelsea's pizza by Beth Swinn/Sweet Talk Publicity; Trisha by Russ Harrington/Sucks & Co; Bake courtesy Bake Sher-ton/Twitter; Big Kenny by Joe Hardwick/Webster PR

DARN TWEETIN'

Follow *Nash Country Weekly* on Twitter @countryweekly



Getting a little tongue action from my girl....

BLAKE SHELTON
@blakeshelton

Again...if a facial cleanser makes your eyes burn perhaps there should be some sort of warning on said cleanser.....#ow

MARTINA McBRIDE
@martinamcbride

Feeling like I'm 6 years old again... sitting on the floor, eating peanut butter from the jar watching #LittleMonsters

CARRIE UNDERWOOD
@carrieunderwood

just had some lobster tonight here in NH. this place is magical. if I move a little slow onstage tonight we know why. Good wine and food.

CHARLES KELLEY
@charleskelleyla

What an amazing weekend at Dollywood performing for everyone who could come! Remember that I will always love you.

DOLLY PARTON
@DollyParton



YEARWOOD'S YEAR

In addition to being featured in an exhibit at the Country Music Hall of Fame and inducted into Nashville's Music City Walk of Fame, **TRISHA YEARWOOD** will get another top honor on Nov. 2 when she will be presented with the ASCAP Voice of Music Award. Past recipients of the award, which is given to "songwriters and artists whose music gives voice to the spirit of a generation," include **GEORGE STRAIT** and **KENNY CHESNEY**, among others.

BIRTHDAYS

SEPT. 14, 1959
JOHN BERRY

SEPT. 14, 1978
DANIELLE PECK

SEPT. 15, 1981
ANDY GIBSON

SEPT. 16, 1947
SONNY LEMAIRE
of Exile

SEPT. 16, 1950
DAVID BELLAMY
of the Bellamy Brothers

SEPT. 16, 1958
TERRY McBRIDE
of McBride & the Ride

SEPT. 18, 1995
TAE DYE
of Maddie & Tae

SEPT. 19, 1963
JEFF BATES

SEPT. 19, 1964
TRISHA YEARWOOD

SEPT. 19, 1986
CHASE RICE



GO BIG & GO HOME

If you've ever wondered how the celebs live, **BIG & RICH's** **BIG KENNY** has invited you to take a glimpse into his life on the road and into the home he shares with his celebrity stylist wife, Christiev, and their four sons. On the new TLC series *Big Kenny and Family*, viewers will follow Kenny and his family to concerts and shows, where the singer/songwriter's over-the-top personality is in the spotlight, to the ordinary things every family does, like dinners, date nights, chores, playtime and bedtime routines. *Big Kenny and Family* premieres on TLC on Sept. 2.

Strapped Up!

What's in a name?
A sense of pride,
a sense of self
and, when it is
emblazoned on
your guitar strap,
a sense of style. First
name, last name,
nickname
... it's a timeless
trend that's tooled
in leather.

(Clockwise from
top left) Jon
Pardi, Shooter
Jennings, Tyler
Hubbard of Flor-
ida Georgia Line,
Justin Moore,
Thomas Rhett
and Lindsay Ell



Shooter by Sean Gardner/Getty Images; Lindsay by Kevin Winter/Getty Images; Justin by Debby Wong/Corbis; Jon and Thomas by Rick Diamond/Getty Images; Tyler by Mark Nader/Corbis

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Date...

or Sentiment



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☐ *I loved you then, I love you still, I always have, I always will*
☐ *I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine*
☐ *I belong with you, you belong with me, we belong together*
☐ *God brought us together to love and honor one another forever*
☐ *No Sentiment (Blank for a handwritten message)*

3. Or personalize a sentiment card with your own message:
(Max of 4 lines, 20 characters per line including spaces & punctuation)

SATISFACTION GUARANTEED. To assure a proper fit, a ring sizer will be sent to you after your reservation has been accepted. *Plus a total of \$9.98 for shipping and service. Allow 4-6 weeks for delivery of your jewelry after we receive your initial deposit. All sales subject to product availability and order acceptance.

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photos by Boyie Creative/Great American Country

BAKED GOAT CHEESE

11 ounces goat cheese

5 ounces cream cheese

Mixed herbs, chopped
(thyme, rosemary, basil, parsley)

1 (28-ounce) can crushed
tomatoes

1 red bell pepper, medium dice

1 tbsp. garlic, minced

Rosemary sprig

Thyme sprig

¼ cup basil leaves,
chopped ribbon-style

2 tbsp. jalapeño,
seeds removed

1 sweet yellow onion,
medium dice

2 tbsp. butter

Salt and pepper to taste

4 tbsp. unsalted butter

1 cup Italian parsley

1 shallot, chopped

1 clove garlic, chopped

In a large saucepan over medium heat, sauté the onion, bell pepper, minced garlic and jalapeño in the butter. When onions begin to brown, **ADD** tomatoes and herbs. **SIMMER** for 30 minutes on low heat. Meanwhile, soften the cheese and **STIR** in fresh chopped herbs until evenly distributed. Form a ball with your hands and wrap cheese in plastic. Set aside.

PURÉE simmered tomato mixture in a high-powered blender or food processor until vegetables and liquid are thoroughly combined.

RINSE blender and reuse to combine butter, parsley, shallot, chopped garlic and a dash of salt and pepper.

To serve:

POUR ½ cup of tomato sauce in the basin of an ovenproof dish. Place cheese ball in the center and **POUR** the remaining tomato sauce around the perimeter of the cheese. Top with herb butter and bake in a 500° oven or 350° convection oven for 5 minutes or until sauce bubbles and cheese softens.

Serve with toasted bread and herb butter.

SPARKLING KRYSTAL

**KRYSTAL KEITH SHARES A
RECIPE FROM HER PLATE BY
PLATE WEBISODE SERIES.**

Krystal Keith, daughter of country superstar Toby Keith, has been marrying her dual passions of music and food for the past couple of years. Recently, Krystal, an accomplished cook, signed on to host a new webisode series called *Plate by Plate*, which follows Krystal as she recreates favorite dishes from restaurants across the country. Recipes vary from baked halibut and butternut squash

tamales to the classic hot dog and a tasty baked goat cheese appetizer, which Krystal shares here. You can find even more great recipes from Krystal at greatamericancountry.com.

BOB PAXMAN





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4 (3 oz.) Gourmet Jumbo Franks
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Albums



Brett Eldredge

Illinois

ATLANTIC NASHVILLE

A

The title might lead you to think that the entire collection consists of Brett navel-gazing about life and love in the heartland. But that's hardly the case here. Nor does it bear any similarity to Bruce Springsteen's *Nebraska* (other than the album is titled after a state), which offered more in the way of mood and less about salvation and optimism. *Illinois*, for the most part, finds Brett exploring his R&B roots (and we mean the real stuff, not 2015 R&B), exhorting the unbridled joy of love and occasionally traveling down a heartbreak road. Brett fairly wails away on the kick-butt opener "Fire," his bluesy voice wrapping around a smoking production. The true gem comes right on the heels of "Fire" with "You Can't Stop Me." If you didn't know any better, you'd swear you were picking up on some vintage '70s soul from the Spinners ("It's a Shame" comes to mind) or The O'Jays. Brett lays down some

equally soulful vocals, even breaking into a little falsetto, and gets a little backing assistance from his buddy Thomas Rhett. The title tune, co-written by Brett, Tom Douglas and Brad Crisler, serves up a poignant and perfectly wistful change of pace that basically tells Brett's story in a neat little nutshell. About the only track that doesn't work is "Drunk on Your Love," an idea that seems a tad overdone. But this accomplishes what a sophomore album should, namely, present some sort of indication of artist evolvment and improvement. Brett co-wrote every

track on the album, and he particularly writes well when the tone is autobiographical, as in the title cut or "Just a Taste." Also, evidenced by his loose, freewheeling vocals, he's obviously becoming more comfortable in the studio. He wrings out the funk and the emotion of a song without oversinging or sounding forced. It's a wonderful, revealing second effort.

BOB PAXMAN

LONG STORY SHORT: There's a joyous combination of vocal quality, song sense and expert production that add up to a winner.



Turnpike Troubadours

Turnpike Troubadours

BOSSIER CITY RECORDS/THIRTY TIGERS

A



The Turnpike Troubadours' new self-titled album is minted with songs that seamlessly combine their old-timey instrumentation (fiddle, harmonica, banjo) with a 21st-century sound and poignant lyrics. Leading the charge is the animated barroom howler, "The Mercury," which resurrects a couple of characters from past songs "The Funeral" and "Good Lord Lorrie." From there, the quintet can do no wrong, revealing their tender side on "A Little Song" and showcasing their clever lyricism



on the soothing "Time of Day" (*Hillbilly girl just as sweet as wine, grew up in a thicket like a muscadine*), before capping the album with a spirited rerecording of "Bossier City," which churns out energy via its chugging harmonica and feisty fiddle.

JIM CASEY

THE NCW JUKEBOX

Essential songs
from the artists
featured in our
Fall Preview.

BLAKE SHELTON
"Gonna"

WILLIE NELSON &
MERLE HAGGARD
"It's All Going
to Pot"

THE JUDDS
"Why Not Me"

REBA MCENTIRE
AND
BROOKS & DUNN
"If You See Him/
If You See Her"

CARRIE
UNDERWOOD
"Smoke Break"

LUKE BRYAN
"Strip It Down"

LOOK
FOR THIS
NASH COUNTRY WEEKLY
PLAYLIST ON
rdio

Singles



Brad Paisley
"Country Nation"

ARISTA/NASHVILLE

A

Just in time for college football season, Brad Paisley releases a tune that name-checks virtually every NCAA mascot there is. "Country Nation" is a highly infectious and insanelly well-written anthem to the hard-working, country-music-loving folks of America. Brad and co-writers Chris DuBois and Kelly Lovelace managed to paint a picture of Americana that even calls out a few NASCAR numbers, in such an incredibly listenable way that you can't help but smile when your favorite team or driv-

er's number comes through the speakers. But it isn't just the lyric that is intoxicating. The arrangement leans more traditional than many of its radio contemporaries, which makes those generous helpings of banjo, pedal steel and fiddle feel farm fresh in comparison.

TAMMY RAGUSA



Scotty McCreery
"Southern Belle"

MERCURY NASHVILLE

C+

This may be a fan's delight but it's a reviewer's dilemma. On one hand, you always want to see artists change things up a little, and Scotty does just that with this latest single.

Scotty shows a mighty range and a little touch of soul, and even executes a rapping technique, indicating that he's comfortable with getting out of his comfort zone. The lyrics mildly and playfully hint at sexuality (unless you think that "honey biscuits" actually refers to breakfast food), which is a different twist for the boy-next-door singer. But the song itself sounds like a parody of every cliché-ridden, Southern-based song of late—although we assume that the writers did not have satirical purposes in mind. The tag line, *Ain't nothin' ring like a Southern Belle*, seems forced, and the tune is replete with now-over-used references to "sweet tea," "blue jeans" and other cultural symbols that songwriters evidently believe are confined to the Southern region. You can't argue, however, that the melody catches your ear, which likely will be enough to propel the song to hitsville.

BOB PAXMAN



Sam Hunt

FIRST CONCERT:

I didn't go to any concerts growing up, so the first concert I went to was probably in college.

FIRST DATE:

The first official proper date was when I was 16 or 17 years old. When I got my license, I took the girl who became my first serious girlfriend out to dinner.

FIRST TIME YOU HEARD YOURSELF ON THE RADIO:

It was actually in Minneapolis at a radio station. The first single was just sent to radio and they had added it. We were visiting radio stations, and they played it as part of the rotation. I was in the room hanging with some people, doing some meet-and-greets, so that was the first time. I'm not really in the car anymore, so I don't really get to listen to radio. Although today I was in an Uber, and "Take Your Time" came on, so that was the first time I heard that on the radio.

FIRST CAR:

Toyota Land Cruiser. It was an old model. I about sunk it three days after I got it. I was at this place called Treat Mountain where I lived. There are lots of mudholes up there. There

was this deep mudhole and I got mud in the gas line. It was in the shop for six months after that.

FIRST SONG YOU LEARNED TO PLAY:

I believe it was "What I Need to Do" by Kenny Chesney.

CAN YOU STILL PLAY IT?

Yeah! It's like three chords, so as soon as I learned those three chords, I was ready.

FIRST DRINK:

I used to sneak sips of my granddad's beer if he left it sitting around and he wasn't in the room. I was probably 10 or 12 years old. It wasn't enough to get in any kind of trouble.

FIRST MUSIC TEACHER:

Ms. Lundy.

FIRST TIME YOU LEFT HOME:

I went to a lot of football camps growing up, so I spent a lot of summers on my own at these random schools and football camps. I guess that would've been the first time I left home for a while.

FIRST KISS:

I'm sure I stole some kisses when I was maybe 8, 9, 10 years old from some of the neighborhood girls.

FIRST STREET YOU LIVED ON:

College Circle in Cedartown, Georgia.

As Seen
On TV!

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Courtney Cole

Louisiana native Courtney Cole has been writing and singing songs for years, but she initially got her start working on the business side of music. Now that Courtney is focusing on her artistry, the world is getting to hear her talent in songs like “Drunk” and as an opening performer on Miranda Lambert’s Roadside Bars & Pink Guitars Tour.



Courtney by Ivan Clay/Magnum; Publicity: Ellie; photos: Courtney Cole; photos: Ellie by John Rusell/CMA; Zooey by Dewey Nicks/FOX; Audrey by Hulton Archive/Getty Images; Courtney performing by Carissa Riccardi

The Perfect Day:

The beach. A beach chair. An umbrella. A beautiful ocean view. A guitar. And a margarita.

Can't Leave Home Without:

A lint roller, because of my dog, **ELLIE**. She sheds a lot!



One Thing People Don't Know About Me:

I NAMED MY DOG, ELLIE, AFTER MY FAVORITE MUSICAL, WICKED. Ellie is short for the spell Elphaba casts on Fiyero. Her full name is Eleka nahmen nahmen ah tum ah tum eleka nahmen!



Biggest Influences:

Shania and **FAITH**. No last names needed! I grew up listening to their music and trying to hit every note they did.

Most Valued Material Possession:

MY GUITAR, because music is everything to me.



Makes Me Laugh:

ZOOEY DESCHANEL—quirky and in charge, the perfect combo.

Guilty Pleasure:

Arby's Curly Fries. I eat these between gigs late at night to stay awake.

Style Icon:

AUDREY HEPBURN. She's such a timeless beauty and I love her style that's sweet, sassy and classy.



Go to Beauty Product:

OPI MAD ABOUT YOU nail polish. It dries super-quick and I love their colors.

NASH NEXT

CONTEST SPOTLIGHT

SCOOTER BRAUN,
ONE OF THE
ENTERTAINMENT
INDUSTRY'S MOST
INFLUENTIAL MUSIC
EXECUTIVES, WILL
SERVE AS A GUEST
JUDGE DURING
THE **NASH NEXT**
CHALLENGE.

CHALLENGE ACCEPTED

WHO'S NEXT?

The NASH Next talent competition is coming down to the wire. Three challenges are left, and you, the fans, have an exciting opportunity to choose the next generation of country stars.

That's right. NASH Next represents a new direction in discovering and releasing music from talented newcomers. And the boldest step involves the fans. For the first time in any talent competition, online engagement between fans and artists will be measured and factored into the overall tally. That means that fans will be directly involved in finding today's upcoming new stars.

NASH Next features a series of challenges that the competitors must complete for a chance to win a shot at stardom. The grand prize winner, which could either be a solo artist or a band, will be signed to the new NASH Next record label. Plus, all of the Top 10 finalists will participate in the NASH Next national tour in 2016. The winners will be decided by a combination of music industry judges and an original "Spin Index" of social media activity and online fan voting. The expert judges are singer/songwriter Kix Brooks, Cumulus Media executive vice president and chief operating officer John Dickey, renowned record producer James Stroud and the recently-added music executive Scooter Braun.

The third in the challenge series, the Periscope Live Broadcast Challenge, runs from Sept. 14-23. During this challenge, artists and bands will perform an original song on social video app Periscope. Check them out and vote for your favorites on nashnextcountry.com.

Following this third round, two challenges will be left before the ultimate Final Challenge, where the remaining competitors must produce an original music video. So jump online and start following NASH Next. You just might discover country's next superstar.

**John
Dickey**



**Kix
Brooks**



**James
Stroud**



BRAINS AND BRAUN

NASH Next's third challenge, the Periscope Live Broadcast Challenge, will benefit from the expertise of its guest judge—SB Projects founder Scooter Braun. Responsible for some of the biggest careers in pop music—Justin Bieber, Ariana Grande, Carly Rae Jepsen, Tori Kelly, PSY and more—Scooter has recently made a foray into country music, helping to break the popular duo Dan + Shay.

Of his role as a judge in the NASH Next competition, Scooter says, "Since the beginning of my career, I have been dedicated to discovering new talent across all genres of music.

With NASH and my fellow judges, we are going to find the best new acts in country music at this year's competition and bring that music to fans through social and digital platforms."

Beginning his career at the age of 19 as a party promoter, Scooter rapidly rose through the ranks, becoming a VP of marketing at So So Def Records at the age of 20 while still in college at Emory University in Atlanta. He established his own company, SB Projects, at 24 and signed Justin Bieber when the pop star was just 13. In 2013, Scooter was named one of *TIME* magazine's "100 Most Influential People in the

World," and along with being listed among *Billboard*'s "40 Under 40." His company, SB Projects, is a diversified entertainment and media company that, in addition to music management and marketing, also houses a film and television production arm.

Scooter, who is also committed to the philosophy of giving back, incorporates a philanthropic tie-in to every initiative. He is on the Advisory Board of Pencils of Promise, which builds schools in developing countries. The organization has thus far assisted in the building of over 200 schools in Asia, Africa and Latin America.



(Clockwise from above) Dan + Shay serenade pop singer Tori Kelly; (from left) Scooter, Def Jam CEO Steve Bartels and Pencils of Promise founder/CEO Adam Braun attend the 4th annual Pencils of Promise Gala; Scooter with kids who benefit from Pencils for Promise; with Justin Bieber.



Scooter & Justin by Kevin Mazur/Getty Images; D+S & Tori by Tim Mosenfelder/Getty Images; Scooter, Steve & Adam by Desiree Navarro/Getty Images; John courtesy Cumulus Media/Kix by Robert Ascroft/Sony Music Nashville; James courtesy James Stroud

GAME ON! THE NASH NEXT CHALLENGE IS HEATING UP AS FANS HELP DECIDE WHO GETS A NEW RECORD DEAL.

After two challenges, the field of 100 hopeful NASH Next artists and bands has been narrowed down to 70. And with three more challenges to go, it's anyone's contest to win. Take a look at the two challenges already completed and the three remaining tests that will help determine the NASH Next Challenge champion.

1	2	3	4	5
COVER SONG CHALLENGE	NASH BRAND JINGLE CHALLENGE WITH TWITTER	PERISCOPE LIVE BROADCAST CHALLENGE	INSTAGRAM VISUAL STORY CHALLENGE	PICCOLLAGE "NEXT COVER" CHALLENGE
<p>Acts/bands picked from one of three cover songs and performed the song on a video shown exclusively on <i>nash-nextcountry.com</i> for fan voting.</p> <p>ENDED</p>	<p>Acts/bands created an original 30-second video of a NASH brand-themed jingle—sans the last five words—on Twitter and asked fans to vote for their favorite by completing the last five words of the jingle in a tweet with the artist's hashtag.</p> <p>ENDED</p>	<p>DATE: SEPT. 14–23 FAN VOTING: SEPT. 24–25</p> <p>Artists/bands will perform an original song at a sponsor's retail location. Fans are asked to engage by visiting the live performance or viewing it on Periscope, where they can "heart," comment and vote.</p>	<p>DATE: SEPT. 28–OCT. 7 FAN VOTING: OCT. 8–9</p> <p>Artists/bands will create a 15-second story loop using original images from an original song that will be submitted to Instagram and voted on by fans.</p>	<p>DATE: OCT. 12–18 FAN PARTICIPATION: OCT. 19–22 FAN VOTING: OCT. 23–24</p> <p>Acts/bands will create an original collage with photos and videos with a simple message, and they will ask their fans to do the same and submit them on PicCollage. Fans will vote for the most creative entries.</p>

The final challenge will involve producing an original music video.
Stay tuned for more details as the competition gets closer to crowning a champion.

BROWSE

LEADERBOARD

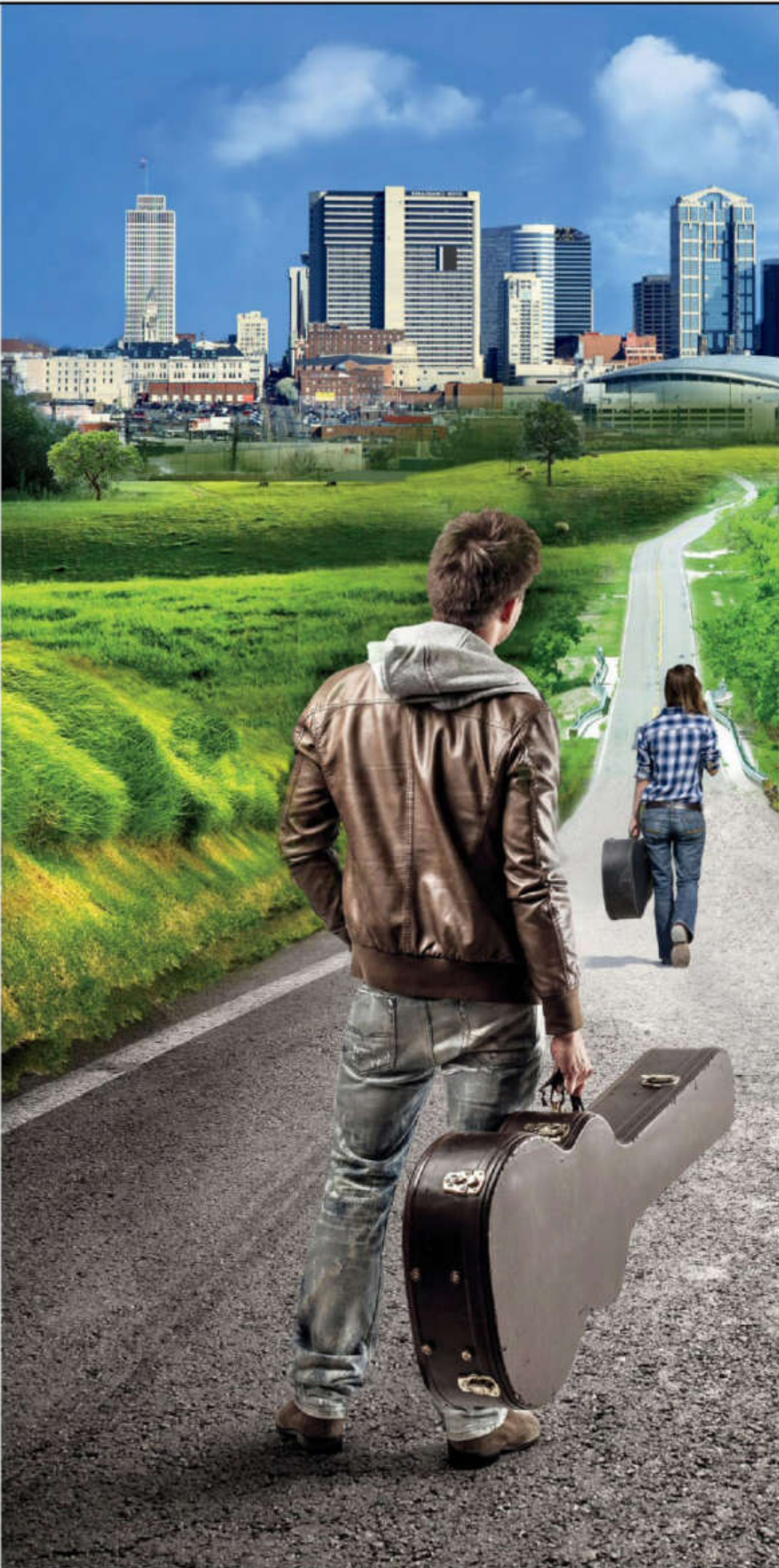
CHALLENGES

WALLS

SIGN IN

WATCH ALL COVER SONG VIDEOS BELOW

<p>3,629 spins</p> <p>1 Kaylee Rutland</p>	<p>1,494 spins</p> <p>2 Hannah Rose</p>	<p>1,927 spins</p> <p>3 Tyler Barham</p>	<p>7,403 spins</p> <p>4 Matt Williams</p>
<p>4,120 spins</p> <p>5 Celeste Keillings</p>	<p>700 spins</p> <p>6 Kimberly Kelly</p>	<p>1,652 spins</p> <p>7 Breaking Southwest</p>	<p>2,571 spins</p> <p>8 Tigililly</p>
<p>2,499 spins</p> <p>9 Rachel Potter and Steel Union</p>	<p>2,361 spins</p> <p>10 SaraBeth</p>	<p>1,384 spins</p> <p>11 Sydney Hutchins</p>	<p>1,349 spins</p> <p>12 Jessica Rhee</p>
<p>1,932 spins</p> <p>13 Black Mountain Show</p>	<p>942 spins</p> <p>14 Adam Searan</p>	<p>3,034 spins</p> <p>15 Cheryle Rose</p>	<p>228 spins</p> <p>16 Lake Caroline</p>
<p>903 spins</p> <p>17 Megan</p>	<p>737 spins</p> <p>18 Caryn Womack</p>	<p>1,543 spins</p> <p>19 Ryan James</p>	<p>1,353 spins</p> <p>20 Grayson Rogers</p>
<p>3,345 spins</p>	<p>520 spins</p>	<p>4,298 spins</p>	<p>1,221 spins</p>



GET INVOLVED

CHOOSING THE NASH NEXT WINNER IS UP TO YOU, AMERICA.

The present media landscape is chock-full of singing competitions of different stripes, from the aging *American Idol* on down to the NASH Next Challenge. In every case, fan engagement is a critical component of any of these competitions' success. What makes NASH Next unique among them is the fact that it was created by a large radio corporation and is being driven by social media engagement with no weekly television platform. It's going well—the competition has posted steady growth and engagement since its launch in June. Here are the key takeaways so far:

MORE THAN 40,000 FANS HAVE REGISTERED TO VOTE.

Social media activity (not including Facebook, which is privacy-protected) has generated **142 MILLION IMPRESSIONS**.

Twitter and Instagram efforts alone have reached **12.6 MILLION PEOPLE**.

The website, nashnextcountry.com, is getting **1.2 MILLION VISITORS PER MONTH**.

MORE THAN HALF the traffic on the NASH Next website is being driven by social media.

MORE THAN HALF the traffic on the NASH Next website is coming from fans using mobile devices.

Fans are, on average, spending 5 minutes on the website and **VIEWING 5.8 PAGES**.

MORE THAN 94% of website visitors look at multiple pages before leaving.

If you're not part of the fun and would like to be, it's easy. Visit nashnextcountry.com and register, then get in on the action with Facebook, Twitter or Instagram while there's still time.

IF THE SONG FITS

ANDY GRAMMER'S ROUSING TREATISE ON DEVOTION GETS A SECOND LIFE AS A COUNTRY SINGLE, WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM ELI YOUNG BAND.



(From left) Mike Eli, Jon Jones, Chris Thompson, James Young

It isn't all that unusual for a country artist's single to receive airplay on pop or adult contemporary stations. Darius Rucker, Florida Georgia Line and Lady Antebellum have all done it recently with pop-leaning singles. But for a pop act who has zero intentions of becoming a country act to cross over with a single, that's pretty unheard of. Yet when Los Angeles-based singer/songwriter Andy Grammer recorded "Honey, I'm Good" for his newest album, *Magazines or Novels*, it took on an unmistakably country vibe.

The charming singer/songwriter stopped by the *Nash Country Weekly* offices with his new pals Eli Young Band, who recently rerecorded the hit song for country radio. "It wasn't like a manipulative move at all. That's what the song called for," he explained, noting "Honey, I'm Good" is an outlier among his songs. "The rest of my album doesn't even sound like that. I had written 100 songs. This was song 101 and it was just a fun day in the studio. It was a stomp-clap thing and it was me doing a

bunch of vocal tracks harmonizing together, and by the end of it, it was like, 'Man, this sounds pretty country.'"

Before EYB's involvement, the disco-tinged "Honey, I'm Good" had already made an organic appearance on the country charts, which ultimately sealed the deal for the collaboration. "It was showing up on [discovery app] Shazam in country because a lot of fans of country were

POP ART

Sometimes female artists struggle to get airplay on country radio (what's up, tomatoes?), but every now and again pop radio will play their songs and make them hits. Here are a half dozen country ladies who have popped up on noncountry charts:



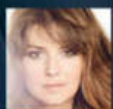
FAITH HILL

Faith landed three No. 1 U.S. adult contemporary hits with "Breathe," "There You'll Be" and "Cry," along with five Top 10 adult contemporary hits, "This Kiss," "Let Me Let Go," "The Way You Love Me," "Like We Never Loved At All" and "One," which was not a country single.



MARTINA McBRIDE

With her huge voice and emotionally resonant songs, Martina couldn't help but score multiformat hits with "I Love You," "There You Are," "In My Daughter's Eyes" and "Anyway." In 2003, "This One's for the Girls" earned her an adult contemporary No. 1.



SHANIA TWAIN

It took pop radio a minute to realize that Shania was a star, but her *Come On Over* album locked down three Top 10s on the *Bill-*

board Hot 100: "You're Still the One," "From This Moment On" and "That Don't Impress Me Much."



DIXIE CHICKS

Country loved the Chicks and, it turns out, everyone else did, too. They got their first Hot 100 Top 20 with "Goodbye Earl," then landed three more with "Long Time Gone," their cover of Fleetwood Mac's "Landslide" and the controversial "Not Ready to Make Nice." "Landslide" also scored a No. 1 on the Hot AC chart.



CARRIE UNDERWOOD

You just can't deny her talent, pop or country. So kudos to Carrie for scoring 10 Top 20 singles on the Hot 100 chart, including her first No. 1, "Inside Your Heaven," and others with pals Brad Paisley ("Remind Me") and Miranda Lambert ("Somethin' Bad").



DOLLY PARTON

Everybody does, indeed, love Dolly. In the late 1970s, she had a string of pop hits with "Here You Come Again," "Heartbreaker," "Baby I'm Burning" and "You're the Only One." Her smash "9 to 5" hit No. 1 on five different charts, including two in Canada.

before it started getting played a lot was, 'It sounds too country. We can't play this on pop,'" he recalls. "So, I thought, 'Man, maybe this should be a country song.' Then we got linked up with these guys and it got its full country take, which I think is good."

When EYB's team initially met with Andy's about collaborating, they decided to, as Mike Eli says, set the song up on a "blind date." Mike admits he wasn't totally blind, however. "My wife and I probably watched that video for the song 20 million times after a few bottles of wine," he says, laughing. "It was kind of a no-brainer for us when our managers had the idea. This song felt so country and we were already in love with it so much, so to be able to be a part of it was a huge opportunity."

Eli Young Band added their own personal touches to the tune, which include Mike picking up a verse and the band adding harmonies, plus a fresh take on the last few seconds of the song. Now the tune is a bona fide country release that is stirring up a lot of enthusiasm from country radio and fans. EYB bassist Jon Jones admits that "Honey, I'm Good" might already have an advantage, though. "All the leg work has already been done," he says. "There's a familiarity there, but not a burnout. And I hope the version that we've done together stands out a little bit on country radio because it's different."

Validating Andy's early assessment of the tune, the stomp-clap rhythm of "Honey, I'm Good" and its new arrangement is country by anyone's measure.

"We feel like this song is more country than some of the stuff that's already on the radio," says Jon. "Which is weird because this is the one kind of crossing over from pop. There have been a lot of songs that have crossed over the other way, but it does feel like it's finally maybe a good environment for something to cross over from pop to country, especially a song that lends itself so well. And is such a great positive story."

The song addresses temptation and fidelity in a relationship, both of which are very real concerns for traveling musicians as well as regular folks. Andy wrote the song about his own life and his three years of marriage. "If you want to go a little deeper and you want to say something, the only way I have found to do that is to do it with myself," he says. "Because if you try to go, 'Oh man, this is an interesting thing to feel,' and you try to just put out a message song, that never sounds cool. Everybody is like, 'Why are you telling me things?' But if you're like, 'I have warts. Would you like to see what I've learned from mine?' I think when you can go a little too honest that is when the ear leans in and you get the 'What the hell is this?' And I think this song has that and I think that allows you to give the message of there's something really cool about staying together."

TAMMY RAGUSA

hearing it and wanting to know who it was and what it was," explains EYB's Mike Eli.

"Yeah, it showed up on a country chart," adds Andy. "That was another indication that, 'I think this is a country song.'"

Andy wasn't the only person who thought so. When he and his record label team took the tune to pop radio, there was some resistance. "Their initial argument

LEAD ROLE

DUSTIN LYNCH IS READY TO TAKE
THE STAGE IN HIS BIGGEST ROLE YET.

DUSTIN LYNCH HAS BEEN a part of two hugely successful tours: Keith Urban's Light the Fuse Tour in 2013 and Luke Bryan's Kick the Dust Up Tour in 2015. Dustin's understudy roles on those tours have served him well, and now he is ready for the lead as he gears up for his first headlining tour in November, aptly named the Hell of a Night Tour after his current hit single.



"Being on tour with Keith and Luke, I've been able to play in front of a lot of new faces and give those faces a taste of what I can do," says Dustin, looking relaxed in a *Nash Country Weekly* office garbed in a pair of jeans, a T-shirt and his trademark cowboy hat. "It's going to be great to go back to some of those cities with our full show and do a full headlining set and give 'em a little

Dustin courtesy Webster PR; perf by Steve Mekler/BBR



HELL OF A NIGHT TOUR

NOV. 14
Richmond, Va.
The National Theater

NOV. 15
Norfolk, Va.
The NorVa Theatre

NOV. 19
Kansas City, Mo.
Arvest Bank Theatre at The Midland

NOV. 20
Denver
Fillmore Auditorium

NOV. 22
Boise, Idaho
Knitting Factory

NOV. 27
Indianapolis
Egyptian Room at Old National Centre

NOV. 28
Memphis
New Daisy Theatre

DEC. 3
Lake Buena Vista, Fla.
House of Blues

DEC. 6
Greensboro, N.C.
Cone Denim Entertainment Center

DEC. 10
Wallingford, Conn.
The Dome at Oakdale Theatre

DEC. 11
Huntington, N.Y.
The Paramount

DEC. 12
New York
Irving Plaza

DEC. 13
Clifton Park, N.Y.
Upstate Concert Hall

DEC. 18
Grand Rapids, Mich.
The Intersection

FEB. 4
New Orleans
House of Blues

FEB. 5
Houston
House of Blues

FEB. 11
Boston
House of Blues

FEB. 13
Silver Spring, Md.
The Fillmore

FEB. 20
Cincinnati
Bogart's

piece of what we've got."

In a young career in which Dustin has already landed a *Billboard* No. 1 album and song—and his current single, "Hell of a Night," is Top 5 and climbing—a successful headlining gig is the next step in cementing his star power. While it's undoubtedly a big step, Dustin has had a couple of really good teachers in Keith and Luke.

"I've learned so much from Keith and Luke," says Dustin. "I've become so much more comfortable onstage and interacting with the crowd. When you first start, you're so worried about what you're doing and not messing up playing a guitar part or singing that the connection with the crowd can be lost a little bit. I'm so comfortable with who I am onstage now and how I'm moving onstage

that I can have a lot more connection with the audience. That's something I've learned from Keith and Luke. They are two of the best at connecting with the audience."

Dustin's new tour, which features opener Chris Lane, will hit more than 30 cities, including New York City, Boston, Houston and Denver. Check out the rest of the announced dates.

JIM CASEY

EYES WIDE OPEN

JERROD NIEMANN

PAYS TRIBUTE
TO THE FANS
HE'S MET ALONG
THE WAY WITH
A NEW SINGLE.

BY TRICIA DESPRES



In case you were wondering, Jerrod Niemann sees you.

Yeah, you.

You are the one he sees spending an entire weekend driving to each and every one of his concerts. And you are the one he notices waiting out by the tour buses after the show, hoping for a photo. And yes, he remembers you—the one who once drove to the local guitar center when the band needed a new amp.

And not only does he see you, now he has found a song that he can sing directly to you.

“We have some fans—I really call them friends now—that definitely have been to more than 100 of our shows,” Jerrod tells *Nash Country Weekly* in a recent interview. “There have been times that we have been in a pickle, for lack of a better term, and they would be glad to run an errand or something for us. It’s like having an extended family out on the road, and for me, it’s always so good to see familiar faces.”

It’s those familiar faces that serve as the foundation for Jerrod’s brand-new single, “Blue Bandana,” which garnered the hitmaker his biggest impact week on country radio to date when it debuted back in July. Known best for songs such as “Lover, Lover,” “What Do You Want” and the No. 1 smash “Drink to That All Night,” Jerrod says “Blue Bandana” spoke to him from the minute he first heard it.

“I think the first several times I listened to the song—and I was letting it all sink in—I went to many different places in my head and many different faces,” recalls Jerrod of the song, which was written by Ben Goldsmith, C.J. Solar and Andrew Scott Wills. “There is definitely a generalized, metaphorical side of the song where it really does represent several people that are kind enough to drive all over

the country and spend their hard-earned money and stand on their feet all day just to see us play our music, which is crazy, but there is not a better compliment in the world.”

And then, there is the actual meaning of the song, best exemplified in the *Almost Famous*-esque music video featuring a girl following the power of the music she loves. “It’s that girl out in the crowd that you might never get to meet, but you always see them out there in the crowd having fun,” says Jerrod.

It was a video treatment that

Jerrod says he was determined to get just right.

“When I am in the studio and something comes to my brain, I know how to make it tangible, but in terms of videos, that is a bit out of my element,” he says, chuckling.

“So, it’s always exciting to be able to see what someone else’s mind thinks of a song. We end up getting all of these video treatments to review, and there are ones you read that I get butterflies in my stomach and I just say, ‘Hmmm, I don’t know if I could do that,’ but then you get the ones that just kind of settle your nerves and you are like, ‘Whoa, that’s cool.’”

And yes, Jerrod got that “cool” feeling when he received the finished video for “Blue Bandana,” which serves as a quick snapshot into a bigger and much more varied body of work that Jerrod is currently finishing—including an upcoming album, set for release in early 2016, that he calls both organic and rustic.

“This might be a character flaw, but from the first album, everything I have done is usually the complete opposite of what everyone else is doing, which doesn’t make me some renegade or anything like that, but basically it’s me saying, ‘There is so much



**“WE WANTED
THESE
SONGS TO
HAVE SOME
LAYERS
AND BE
ABLE TO
BREATHE.”**



Jerrod and wife Morgan, who married in 2014, share a similar thirst for adventure and whimsy.



per and Morgan & Jerrod by Rick Diamond/Getty Images; wedding photo courtesy Morgan Petek facebook

JERROD NIEMANN CONTINUED

of that; I want to balance it out with *this*,” Jerrod says. “Every album has had a bit of craziness on it, but this time, I wanted to record in a bit more acoustic manner, because nobody is.”

This left Jerrod and his team revisiting an old recording technique that he pulled out from his “*Lover, Lover*” days, in which knobs were turned down halfway on everything and blankets were thrown over the amps of the electric guitars to help deaden the sound a bit.

“We wanted these songs to have some layers and be able to breathe,” says Jerrod, who co-produced “*Blue Bandana*” alongside Jimmie Lee Sloas. “Being able to get in there and create the world around the songs that I wished I had written is just as fulfilling and exciting to me as writing songs.”

And while Jerrod says he “only

wrote two or three” songs on his upcoming fourth album (“I wasn’t quite sure what I had to say”), the ones he did write are “probably the most traditional cuts on the album. Right now, no one is using the steel guitar,” exclaims Jerrod, who spent most of his summer playing select festival and solo dates around the country. “I wanted to be sure to use those elements that seem to be missing elsewhere.”

And as Jerrod and new wife Morgan approach their one-year anniversary in October, the Kansas native says he sees within the upcoming album a whole new side of himself, too.

“It’s taken me this long, mentally and spiritually, on some level, to see things in life bigger than myself,” Jerrod says, more quietly than before. “The weight of the world is now leaning on two pairs of shoulders. I see that now.” **NCW**

A Love So Precious

•
*A bridal portrait doll lavished
with rose gold accents*

•
*Beautifully handcrafted
in fine bisque porcelain*

•
*Couture-inspired gown is meticulously
hand-tailored and richly embellished*

An inspired portrait of love everlasting

She has dreamed about her wedding since she was a little girl. But it was her rose gold engagement ring—handed down through generations of her beloved's family—that inspired a gown to honor both his past and their future. She cannot wait to walk down the aisle and acknowledge *A Love So Precious*!

Exceptional beauty ... Unparalleled Crafting

Master Doll Artist Cindy McClure created this delicate bride that is expertly crafted of the finest porcelain. *A Love So Precious* is meticulously hand-painted and blushed. Her imaginative wedding ensemble features a mesmerizing gown with lush embroidery, generous beading, cascading lace and the warmth of champagne-toned fabrics and embellishments inspired by the “rose gold” ring sculpted on her dainty left hand. Her veil, sparkling earrings, and bouquet complete the look.

A superb value—satisfaction guaranteed

Couture-inspired bride dolls with this level of artistry and detail can sell for thousands, but *A Love So Precious* may be acquired for \$199.99*, payable in six easy installments of *only* \$33.33, and backed by our 365-day guarantee. But you must act now before time runs out on this exclusive edition. Don't delay; reserve your doll today!

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03-02132-001-BIR



A Love So Precious is about 21" tall. This doll is not a toy, but a fine collectible.



9200 North Maryland Ave. Niles, Illinois 60714-1397

PLEASE RESPOND PROMPTLY

☐ **YES!** Please reserve *A Love So Precious* for me as described in this announcement.

*Plus a total of \$21.99 shipping and service charges. Please allow 2 to 4 weeks for shipment after initial payment is received. All orders are subject to acceptance.

Name (please print clearly) _____ ()
Telephone _____

Address _____ Apt. No. _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail Address _____

03-02132-001-D08101

2015 Fall

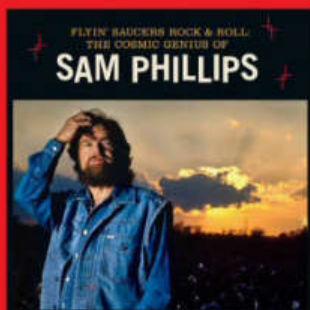
The days might be shorter and the weather might be chillier, but the next few months will be anything but boring for country music fans. Here are **21** reasons to get pumped about fall.

The Voice Returns **SEPT. 21**

There's a hard-to-define feeling of something missing in the months between seasons of NBC's addictive competition series, *The Voice*. Credit for that largely goes to the larger-than-life presence of coach **BLAKE SHELTON** and the comic chemistry he shares with his foil, Maroon 5's Adam Levine. In the show's ninth season, Blake and Adam will compete for the title with fellow coaches Pharrell Williams and Gwen Stefani. Blake has still coached more winners than all the rest, so it'll be worth watching to see if he can do it again. If for no other reason, tune in to see if Blake and Gwen break the ice with any divorce jokes.



Preview

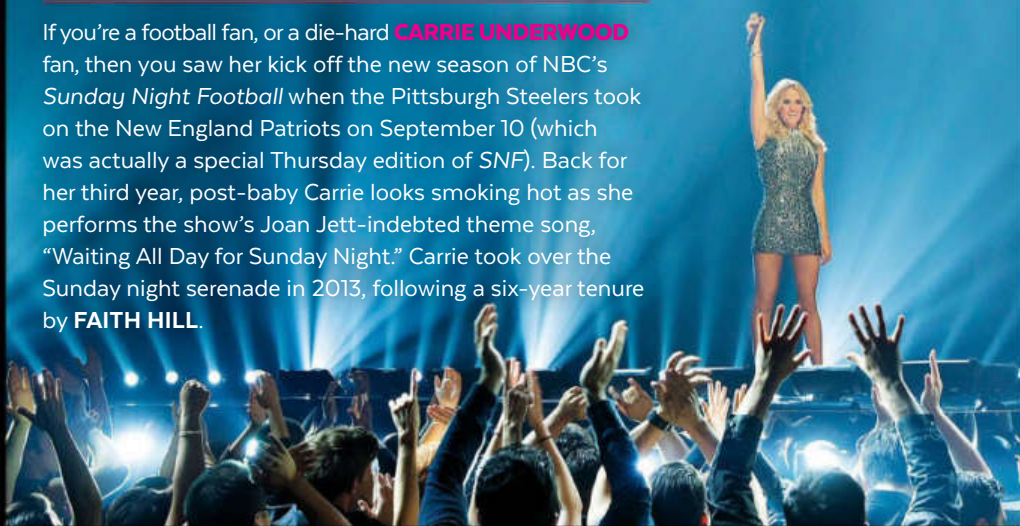


Flyin' Saucers Rock & Roll: The Cosmic Genius of Sam Phillips **SEPT.-JUNE, 2016**

The Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum in Nashville honors the late record producer and owner of Sun Studios in Memphis, **SAM PHILLIPS**, with this career-spanning retrospective. Sam introduced artists like Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis and others to the world while helping to break down the cultural and racial barriers that existed in music during the 1950s. And while you're visiting, make sure to check out additional exhibits like Trisha Yearwood: *The Song Remembers When*, Eric Church: *Inside the Outsider*, which opens Sept. 18, Luke Bryan: *Dirt Road Diary* and the extraordinary Dylan, Cash and the Nashville Cats: *A New Music City*.

Carrie Underwood and Sunday Night Football **SEPT. 10-JAN. 3**

If you're a football fan, or a die-hard **CARRIE UNDERWOOD** fan, then you saw her kick off the new season of NBC's *Sunday Night Football* when the Pittsburgh Steelers took on the New England Patriots on September 10 (which was actually a special Thursday edition of SNF). Back for her third year, post-baby Carrie looks smoking hot as she performs the show's Joan Jett-indebted theme song, "Waiting All Day for Sunday Night." Carrie took over the Sunday night serenade in 2013, following a six-year tenure by FAITH HILL.



Ascend Amphitheater Schedule **SEPT.-NOV.**



ERIC CHURCH christened Nashville's new \$52-million Ascend Amphitheater with back-to-back sold-out shows in July. Since then, the 6,800-capacity outdoor venue has welcomed a who's who of musical acts from all genres, including Phish, My Morning Jacket, Counting Crows, Old Crow Medicine Show, ZZ Top, Blackberry Smoke and Widespread Panic. The fall lineup is a cornucopia of talent, including **LORETTA LYNN** and **STEVE EARLE** (Sept. 19), **CHRIS YOUNG** with **JERROD NIEMANN** and **CAM** (Sept. 30), **LYNYRD SKYNYRD** (Oct. 2), **JACKSON BROWNE** (Oct. 11) and **DIERKS BENTLEY** with special guests **FGL**, **COLE SWINDELL**, **THOMAS RHETT** and **CANAAN SMITH** (Nov. 1).



Nashville Season 4

SEPT. 23

Rayna, Juliette, Scarlett, Will and the rest will return for more drama and music when the fourth season of **NASHVILLE** premieres on ABC. Buddy Miller is still on board as musical director, so prepare yourself for jaw-dropping songs penned by Nashville's finest and deliciously interwoven plot lines of deceit and power-grabbing in the Athens of the South.



Miranda Lambert's Roadside Bars & Pink Guitars Tour

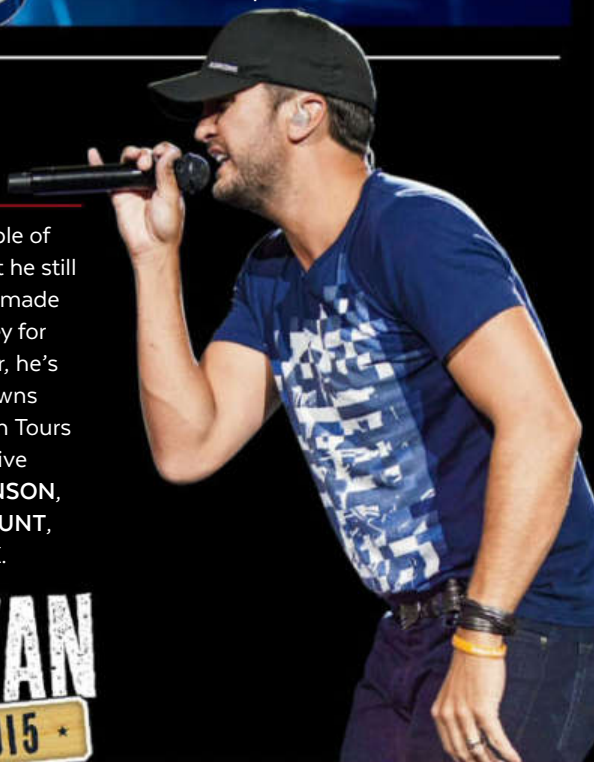
SEPT. 24

MIRANDA LAMBERT will hit the road in the fall as a newly single woman, so it probably goes without saying that she'll be hungry to wow the crowds who come out for her Roadside Bars & Pink Guitars Tour. This trip will also shed some light on country's talented female artists, with guests **RAELYNN**, **ASHLEY MONROE**, **CLARE DUNN** and **COURTNEY COLE** coming along to warm the crowds up.

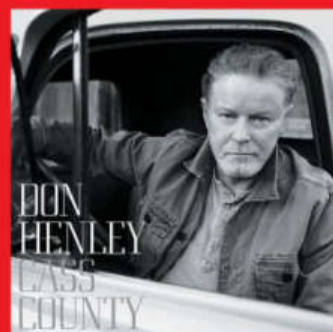
Luke Bryan's Farm Tour

SEPT. 30–OCT. 10

LUKE BRYAN is perfectly capable of filling up arenas these days, but he still maintains the commitment he made early in his career to raise money for farming communities. This year, he's branching out to some new towns he's never visited on prior Farm Tours and bringing along an impressive crop of guests with **CHRIS JANSON**, **THE PEACH PICKERS**, **SAM HUNT**, **CHANCIE NEAL** and **DJ ROCK**.



LUKE BRYAN
★ FARM TOUR 2015 ★



Don Henley's Cass County

SEPT. 25

Whether you knew him as a member of the iconic Eagles rock band or as a solo artist, one thing you may not have known is that **DON HENLEY**'s musical roots are deep in country. The Gilmer, Texas, native is now paying homage to his rural raising in his new album, *Cass County*. Don collaborated with some of country's best for the project, including **DOLLY PARTON**, **MIRANDA LAMBERT**, **MERLE HAGGARD**, **VINCE GILL**, **JAMEY JOHNSON**, **LEE ANN WOMACK**, **ALISON KRAUSS**, **MARTINA MCBRIDE**, **TRISHA YEARWOOD**, **ASHLEY MONROE**, **LUCINDA WILLIAMS** and the **DIXIE CHICKS** (fellow Texans Emily Robison and Martie Maguire). *Cass County* will be released Sept. 25.

Grand Ole Opry 90th Birthday Bash OCT. 2-3

THE GRAND OLE OPRY turns the milestone age of 90 this year and they're throwing a big bash to celebrate during the weekend of Oct. 2-3 at the Grand Ole Opry House in Nashville. The special lineup on Oct. 2 will include **LITTLE BIG TOWN**, **JOE DIFFIE**, **DIAMOND RIO** and others to be announced. Saturday night, Oct. 3, enjoy **THE OAK RIDGE BOYS**, **TRACE ADKINS** and other top-name acts. Though it's not part of the official birthday weekend, the Tuesday Night Opry on Oct. 6 will be worth checking out, as it's headlined by **MIRANDA LAMBERT**.



Austin City Limits Music Festival OCT. 2-4 & OCT. 9-11

Keep Austin weird, keep Austin awesome. The ACL Music Festival is two weekends of nonstop musical action from more than 100 bands across all genres. In addition to acts like the Foo Fighters, Drake, The Strokes, Billy Idol and Hozier, country fans can expect to catch **DWIGHT YOAKAM**, **STURGILL SIMPSON**, **ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL** and many more. In a city they call the "Live Music Capital of the World,"

ACL Music Festival is Austin's special tip of the hat to music lovers everywhere.



All for the Hall New York OCT. 6

The Country Music Hall of Fame's benefit concert, We're All for the Hall, brings thousands of fans to Nashville's Bridgestone Arena every May. It's been such a huge success that five stars are taking their talents to the Big Apple on Oct. 6 for All for the Hall New York. **BRAD PAISLEY**, **CARRIE UNDERWOOD**, **VINCE GILL**, **EMMYLOU HARRIS** and **PAUL SIMON** will take the stage at the Best Buy Theater in Times Square for a "guitar pull," where the gang will gather and take turns presenting their songs.



The Judds Girls Night Out OCT. 7-24

Wynonna and mom Naomi, **THE JUDDS**, are back with their first concerts together in nearly five years. The award-winning duo is taking up residency at The Venetian in Las Vegas for nine shows: Oct. 7, 10, 13, 14, 16, 17, 21, 23 and 24. No doubt, mom and daughter will belt out favorites like "Mama He's Crazy," "Love Can Build a Bridge" and others during this hit-filled show. For more details and ticket info, visit venetian.com.





Willie Nelson & Merle Haggard Tour OCT. 15–NOV. 28

On the heels of releasing their sixth collaborative album, *Django and Jimmie*, **WILLIE NELSON**, 82, and **MERLE HAGGARD**, 78, are saddling up for an eight-date tour—with possibly more dates to be announced—that will take them to South Carolina, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Indiana, Kentucky, Wisconsin and Texas. There's a good chance Willie and Merle will play many of their individual hits and duets like "Pancho and Lefty," as well as some new tunes from *Django and Jimmie*, which reached No. 1 on the *Billboard* Top Country Albums chart in June.

Tootsie's 55th Birthday OCT. 21

The little dive bar that could, **TOOTSIE's**, will celebrate its 55th anniversary Oct. 21 on Nashville's historic honky-tonk district with a heck of a block party. The free concert will include performances by **RANDY HOUSER**, **JAMEY JOHNSON**, **TERRI CLARK** and **TROY GENTRY**, but the annual Birthday Bash is known to welcome surprise guests. Tootsie's opened in 1960 and became famous as a hangout for country stars who were performing at the Grand Ole Opry across the alley. Legends like **KRIS KRISTOFFERSON**, **WILLIE NELSON** and **LORETTA LYNN** are among their famous customers.

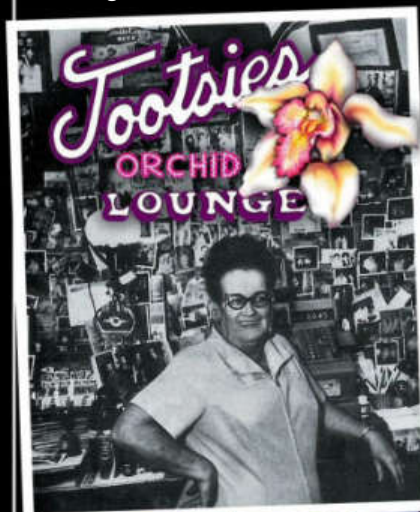


Dierks Bentley's Miles & Music for Kids NOV. 1

Get your motor runnin', because **DIERKS BENTLEY's** 10th annual Miles & Music for Kids motorcycle ride and benefit concert takes place Nov. 1. This star-studded event has already raised more than \$3 million for Children's Miracle Network hospitals and kicks off this year's CMA Awards Week. The ride begins at the Harley-Davidson store in Columbia, Tenn., and ends in Nashville, where **FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE**, **THOMAS RHETT**, **COLE SWINDELL**, **THE CADILLAC THREE**, **CANAAN SMITH** and **BROOKE EDEN** will join Dierks and host Storme Warren for a sold-out concert at the Ascend Amphitheater.

49th Annual CMA Awards NOV. 4

BRAD PAISLEY and **CARRIE UNDERWOOD** will return for the eighth consecutive year to host Country Music's Biggest Night, the annual industry-voted CMA Awards at the Bridgestone Arena in Nashville. In addition to the red-carpet fashions and awards surprises, there are always numerous one-of-a-kind performances (the kind you'll either love or hate) on this cornerstone of the country music industry. Tune in to see what happens Nov. 4 at 8 p.m. ET on ABC.



Fall Album Releases

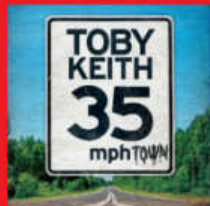
Don't miss out on these red-hot releases coming down the pike from some of country music's finest.

SEPT. 18



Clare Dunn
Clare Dunn

OCT. 9



Toby Keith
35 Mph Town

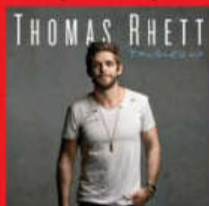


Alabama
Southern Drawl



Josh Thompson
Change: The Lost Record, Volume One

SEPT. 25



Thomas Rhett
Tangled Up

OCT. 23



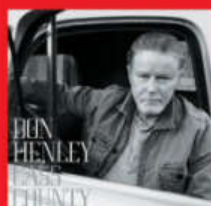
Carrie Underwood
Storyteller



Clint Black
On Purpose



George Strait
TBD



Don Henley
Cass County

NOV. 13



Chris Young
I'm Comin' Over



Hank Williams Movie

NOV. 27

Sony Pictures Classics has slated the **HANK WILLIAMS** biopic *I Saw the Light* for a Nov. 27 release date. The movie stars British-born actor **TOM HIDDLESTON** as Hank and Elizabeth Olsen as his wife, Audrey. *I Saw the Light* chronicles Hank's rise to country stardom and the destructive impact it had on his health and personal life, culminating with his sudden death at the age of 29 in 1953. Tom, who is best known for his role as Loki in *The Avengers* and *Thor*, will sing multiple Hank songs throughout the film, which was written and produced by Marc Abraham.

Reba, Brooks & Dunn: Together in Vegas

DEC. 1-12

Where else could you see superstars **REBA McENTIRE** and a reunited **BROOKS & DUNN** together in one show? Only in Las Vegas—more specifically, the fabulous Colosseum at Caesars Palace. They'll perform their individual hits and also join each other for some exciting collaborations. It's your last chance this year to catch this one-of-a-kind experience, which has been drawing some ecstatic reviews. For ticket information, go to caesars.com.



Coat of Many Colors

DEC. 3

DOLLY PARTON's autobiographical hit "Coat of Many Colors" inspired this made-for-TV movie, airing Dec. 3 on NBC at 9 p.m. ET. We can't wait to see **JENNIFER NETTLES** in the role of Dolly's mother, with Ricky Schroder tapped to play Dolly's dad. The movie is set in the mountains of East Tennessee around 1955.

National Finals Rodeo

DEC. 3-12

With a record-breaking attendance of more than 177,000 last year, the **WRANGLER NATIONAL FINALS RODEO** is returning to Thomas & Mack Center in Las Vegas for its 31st consecutive year. Not only is the NFR 10 days of rodeo fun for a \$10 million purse, but it's also 10 days of country music fun at a plethora of casinos and outdoor stages. This year's lineup is sure to cause a stampede when it's announced in the coming days.





STAR POWER

**CASADEE POPE HAS FOUND
HER INVINCIBILITY IN THE
FORM OF A NEW SONG.**

IF YOU WERE A KID in the last 30 years or so, there's a good chance you came across a generation of the *Super Mario Bros.* video game. In between toppling Koopa Troopa turtles, smushing Goomba mushrooms

and collecting coins—you know, the time-consuming minutiae of Mario's everyday life—there were moments of invincibility, literally, where the music became supercharged and Mario could not be stopped. Those

moments came in the form of a yellow "Invincibility Star" that bounced all over the screen.

Cassadee Pope will be the first person to tell you that the first half of this year didn't go exactly as

the 26-year-old Florida native had planned. As much as she wanted to get new music out there, it just wasn't happening. Too many obstacles were in the way—a turtle here, a mushroom there. But if there is one thing *The Voice* winner has learned since taking the reality show title in 2012 it's that if you want to make it in the music industry you've got to be tough, just like Nintendo's favorite son.

To stay busy, Cassadee did what she does best. She wrote . . . and wrote . . . and wrote, creating a cache of songs in her Nashville home while occasionally playing a live show. And then one day she got an email from Big Machine Records president/CEO Scott Borchetta that cued her energetic music of invincibility.

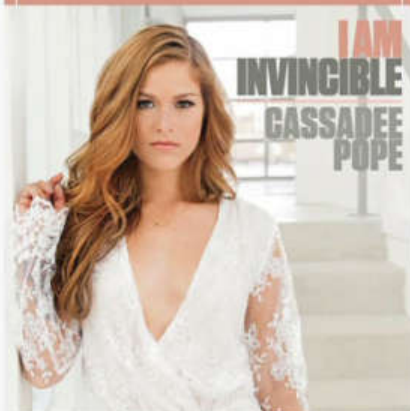
"For the past eight months I was at my home in Nashville just writing five days a week, that was my life—every now and then I'd play a show, but most of the time I was at home," says Cassadee after settling in to an office on the *Nash Country Weekly* campus. Her green eyes open wide as she flashes a pearly smile, continuing, "And then Scott sent me an email with a song in it, and I remember listening to it and thinking, 'This is totally something I want to say, something I want to encourage people to do to get through the tough times,' because that's what I'm kinda doing right now. I would consider the first half of this year to be a little tough for me because I really wanted to be out there with new music but it just wasn't happening for me."

The song in the email was "I Am Invincible," a ballad of empowerment written by Brett Boyett and Nash Overstreet that declares *I am invincible / I am unbreakable / I am a diamond cut to last / I am unstoppable / I am a hero / Like a phoenix from the ash*. While the lyrics could easily come across as clichéd in the wrong hands, the song was anything but that when Cassadee wrapped her soaring vocals around them as she debuted "I Am

CONFIDENCE BOOSTER

Riding the buzz generated by her new single, "I Am Invincible," Cassadee has been working on new music for her sophomore album that she hopes to have finished by early 2016, and she's hinting that the theme of "Invincible" will carry over to other songs on the album.

"For the past eight or nine months, I've written a gazillion songs, so I have a lot of new music to get in the studio and sift through and record. All the songs I've written over the past year are very inspirational, empowering, a little edgier, sassier. I feel that in myself. I feel way more confident than in the past. I'm more in touch with what I want to say as an artist, which was something I never thought was an issue because I wrote songs that came naturally. Now I feel like it's important to know what I want to say as an artist. You can love music and have fun doing it, but it takes you to the next level when you really have a message that you want to get across."



Invincible" at the opening ceremonies of the Special Olympics World Games on July 25.

"Singing at the opening ceremonies was one of the best experiences I've ever had," says Cassadee. "I got to go up onstage and sing in front of all the

people that truly are invincible and defy the odds. They get through life with a smile on their face no matter what's in their way. I couldn't think of a better place to debut it."

It's been almost two years since Cassadee released her debut album, *Frame by Frame*, which reached No. 1 on *Billboard's* Top Country Albums chart. After more than a year without a new single on the radio airwaves, Cassadee's performance of "I Am Invincible" put her back in the spotlight. It marinated in the public psyche for more than a month until it was released to country radio on Sept. 8 and set Cassadee on a whirlwind trek of live performances across the country.

"This single happened so quickly that everything is up in the air right now," says Cassadee. "Details and final tweaks are being figured out the night before I do things, so I'm not quite sure what I'm doing next week, but my calendar dates say 'Promo.' I just get on the bus or plane and go. I'm off and running."

Cassadee is now running with the confidence of an invincible Mario, and she's ready to unleash that swagger onstage. It's something she gleaned from her time on *The Voice* as well as from opening shows for the likes of Tim McGraw, Blake Shelton and Miranda Lambert.

"If you're uncomfortable or unsure of yourself onstage, that will translate to the crowd and they will be unsure of you," she says. "When you get onstage, you really have to sell it, and it's almost like an alter ego. In everyday life I definitely have insecurities, I'm a normal human being. Onstage, it's almost like you have to forget about that realize you're up there for a reason. And now that I have a song like 'Invincible,' I see how important it is to be an artist people turn to for empowerment and inspiration and that's something I really want to hone in on as I grow as an artist."

Game on, Cassadee.

JIM CASEY



NO MUCH LIKE IN HIS MAJOR LABEL HEYDAY, **SAMMY KERSHAW** IS STILL DOING IT HIS OWN WAY.

COMPROMISES

BY CHUCK DAUPHIN

For his new album, *I Won't Back Down*, Sammy Kershaw threw his audience something of a curveball.

The Louisiana hitmaker, known for such hits as "Cadillac Style" and "She Don't Know She's Beautiful," has often spoken of his love for honky-tonk legends George Jones and Mel Street, but the title track from this new album is a cover of the 1989 pop classic from Tom Petty. Sammy told *Nash Country Weekly* that while the song has long been a favorite of his, the decision to record it came at the last minute.

"When we were cutting the album, it was the last song that we picked," the singer says. "It was actually a total accident the way that it happened. I got to the studio, and the radio was playing. [Drummer] Lonnie Wilson and I were the only ones there. I told him that I had all the songs picked out, but needed one more cover song. I couldn't figure out which song to do. Then, 'I Won't Back Down' came on the radio, and Lonnie said 'I've always liked that song.' I said 'Me too. That fits me great.

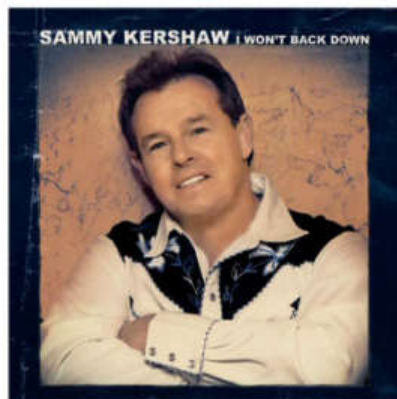
That's what we'll cut.' It just hit me at the right time."

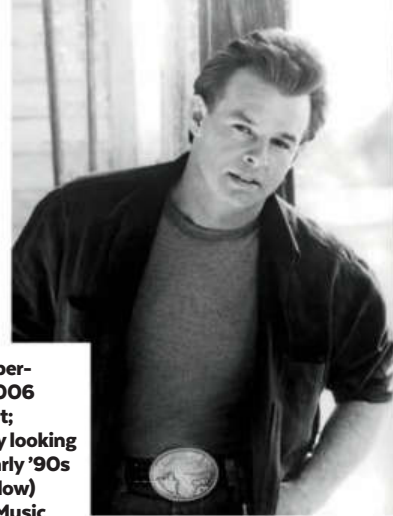
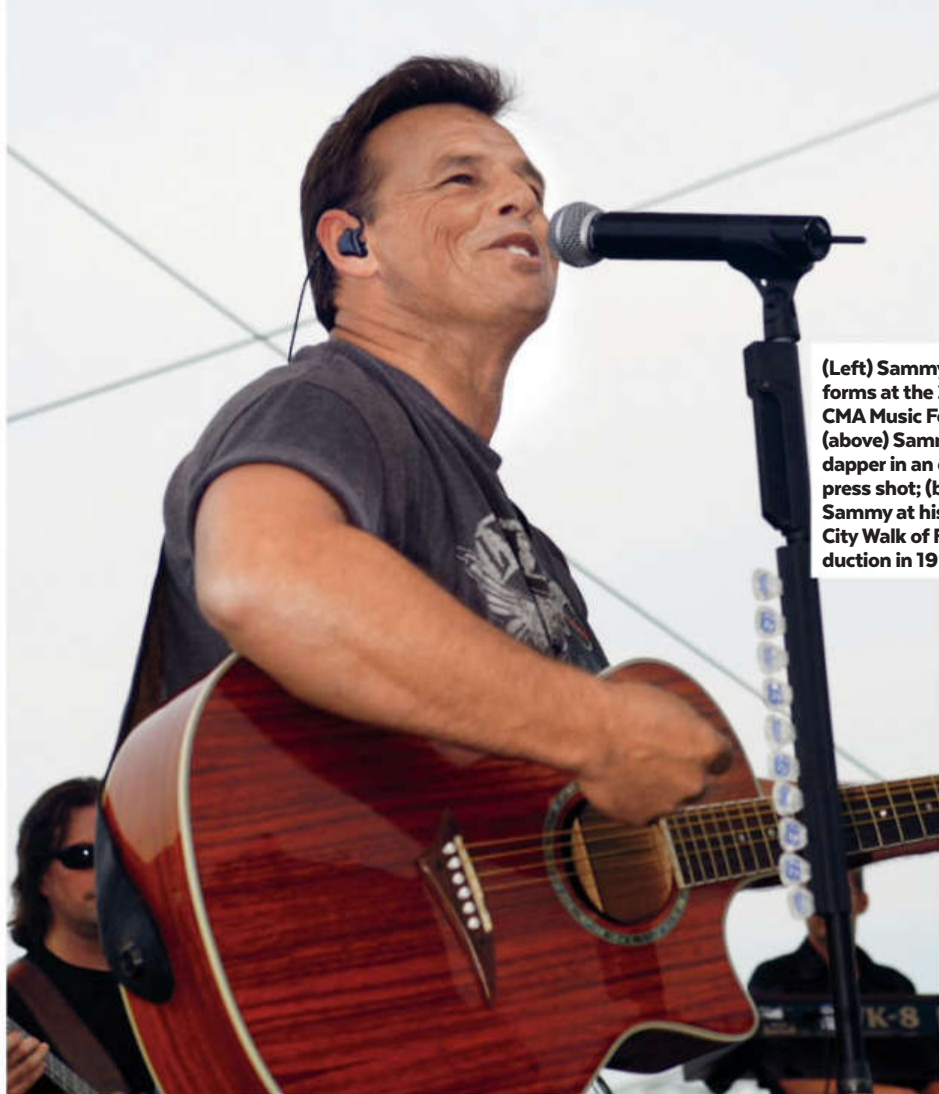
Petty's original, from the landmark 1989 album *Full Moon Fever*, definitely left a mark on Sammy, who insists it's his personal mantra. "I'm not a guy who backs down from anything unless somebody can leave a crack in the door and make me start thinking and wondering if I might be wrong on something," he says. "Then there's a shot. If you can't show

me or get me to thinking I might be wrong, I'm not going to back down. There's just some things I won't back down from. It's like Aaron Tippin says: 'You've got to stand for something, or you'll fall for anything.' I'm not one to do that

or be politically correct. I've never been that way and won't be."

When asked about things that he wouldn't back down from, Sammy doesn't hesitate. "God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. I've done that many times," he points out. "I stand up for my family, my country and my friends. I'm a loyal guy. If I become your friend, I will go to bat for you before you go to bat for yourself."





(Left) Sammy performs at the 2006 CMA Music Fest; (above) Sammy looking dapper in an early '90s press shot; (below) Sammy at his Music City Walk of Fame induction in 1994.



“IF I BECOME YOUR FRIEND, I WILL GO TO BAT FOR YOU BEFORE YOU GO TO BAT FOR YOURSELF.”

SAMMY KERSHAW CONTINUED

In 1999, the singer put that reputation on the line with his then-record label because he believed in a song so much. “I was at Mercury and had just come off of a million-selling album, and we had just released *Maybe Not Tonight*. There was a song called ‘How Much Does the World Weigh.’ I really wanted that song to become a single. I knew it would be a hit record. I remember going in and asking [label boss] Luke Lewis about it. He said they weren’t going to release it or any other songs off of the album.”

Taken aback by the response, Sammy laid things on the line. “I told him that was the only song I had ever tried to fight for. [I said], ‘If you can’t release this record, I’m going to ask you to let me go.’ A couple of weeks later, he called me up and did just that, which was fine with me. I felt so strong about that song. It’s still one of my favorite songs I’ve ever heard.”

Fifteen years later, Sammy says there are no ill feelings concerning Mercury or former president Luke Lewis, adding that the executive came through for him years later when he didn’t have to. “Luke Lewis was great to me. A few years later, I was having some troubles and lost everything,” he explains. “I remember calling him up and asking him for a favor. Every time I cut an album, we would always overcut for it, so there were about 25 songs or so that would never make the album. The masters were sitting in the Mercury vault. I called him up and said, ‘Luke, I don’t have any money or a label. I don’t have anything. Would you give me back all of my unreleased masters?’ He said he would do that, and sent someone down in the vault and gave me all of the tracks that never made the album.”

The first single from *I Won’t Back Down* is the upbeat “Grillin’ and Chillin’,” a song that Sammy says fits this time of year as well as his health and lifestyle needs (see sidebar). “It’s a perfect summer song, and



(Above, from left) Mark Wills, Luke Lewis, Sammy and Keith Stegall celebrate Sammy's third platinum album, *Labor of Love*, in 1999; (below, from left) Joe Diffie, Sammy and Aaron Tippin catch a few fish—and a few brews—on the water.



EATING RIGHT

Sammy's love of grilling out is chronicled in the new song "Grillin' and Chillin'," and it's not just lip service. It's become a way of life that he is very passionate about and fits into his new diet.

"It goes deeper than that for me. Every day I'm home, the grill is going. I remember when I had this big farm, and when the neighbors seen the buses in, they knew they could just walk across the street because the grill was going and everybody was invited. I still do it—even by myself," he says.

Beyond the communal aspect of it, grilling has also become something Sammy does out of necessity. "I've had a little bit of stomach problems the last few years, and never could find out what was causing them. I did some blood work and found I was very intolerant of a lot of different foods. I've been cutting those off, and I'm doing a whole lot better. Some of those things I've been intolerant of are certain spices, which is tough for a Cajun boy. When you have to leave out paprika or black pepper, we have a problem," he said with a laugh, adding that there are options. "But, white pepper is really good—and it's hot. Most people don't even know about it."

In a sense, the singer says he has had to make a total lifestyle change, as he's had to give up some longtime staples of his diet. "I love cinnamon and maple syrup. I can't have either of those. I love honey, and I had to cut that out. Gluten was my biggest enemy," he says. "For me not to be able to eat bread, I thought I was going to lose my mind. I went into the store today looking for gluten-free bread. I found it in the freezer, which I hate out of the freezer. I decided to try it one day, put it in the toaster and some butter on it, and it was like eating a fine French bread. The texture of the bread is awesome—I love it. They make so many things that are gluten-free. There's blueberry muffins, cornbread, brownies, cake. The word gluten comes from glue—so you're eating glue. It showed in my blood work that the gluten was making my blood cells explode. Since I've been off of that, things have gotten a whole lot better, but still got a ways to go."

then you have football season around the corner—and all the tailgating," he says.

Sammy enjoyed a new level of freedom during the recording process of *I Won't Back Down*, thanks to the hands-off approach of his new label, Cleopatra. "They didn't tell me what songs I had to do—the only stipulation was that they wanted 10 brand-new songs with two covers," he says. "That didn't bother me, because I've always had a cover of a song that had been a hit from years ago on each of my records." In addition to the title cut, he also tipped the hat to the 1969 hit "Take a Letter, Maria," made famous by R.B. Greaves.

There is also plenty of original material on *I Won't Back Down*, with some of Music City's top writers being represented, such as David Lee Murphy and Casey Beathard. Sammy expresses his amazement at the wealth of talent in Nashville—and the songwriters' willingness to share their songs with him. "The publishers and the writers on Music Row sent me some great material," he says. "I was kind of scared if I was going to find some good songs in the beginning because I know that radio hasn't played me in a lot of years. I was worried about getting songs from the writers because they want their songs cut by the biggest artists out there. I respect that. It's how they make

their living, but they really came through for me."

Additionally, *I Won't Back Down* is the first studio album that Sammy has produced by himself. He says he loves the feeling of flying solo and doing things his way, but he is quick to praise his teachers. "I learned from the best—Norro Wilson and Buddy Cannon," he says. "I worked with them for so long, and they are so good at what they do. I was the first one Buddy ever produced. Harold Shedd brought in Norro to help him out. It worked out so great learning from those two. God knew what he was doing with my career from the beginning."

Up next for Sammy is the fall release of his autobiography and a blues record he's been working on for some time. What other artists from outside country may he be covering next? The answer might surprise you!

"I guess my favorite—if I had to choose—would be Bryan Adams. He's one of the greatest songwriters I have ever heard," reveals Sammy. "His lyrics are so simple that anyone in the world knows what he's singing about. The melodies are so simple and great. Bryan Adams is a hoss. I'd love to write with him sometime."

Does that mean "Summer of '69" may show up on his next album?

"Never say never," Sammy replies. **NCW**

A photograph of Bill Anderson, an older man with grey hair wearing a tan blazer over a colorful patterned shirt, shaking hands with a younger man in a black shirt on a stage. A woman with long dark hair in a black dress stands to the left. In the background, a large wooden sign reads "GRAND OLE OPRY". To the right, a podium features the "WSM" logo and the words "GRAND OLE".

THERE & BACK AGAIN

WHISPERIN' **BILL ANDERSON'S**
GUITAR COMES HOME AT LAST

THERE'S SOMETHING SPECIAL ABOUT the love an artist can feel toward a favorite guitar. Maybe it's based on physical contact—a gentle embrace, a soft strum. They can share a lot of secrets in the words of songs they might write together, even in the scratches that might document some party long ago that got a little out of control.

For Whisperin' Bill Anderson, that special partner was an acoustic guitar that his friend and fellow Opry member Billy Grammer built especially for him some 50 years ago. "When he began to manufacture guitars, he came to me and about half a dozen Opry people and said, 'Would you consider

playing one of my guitars to help me publicize it?'" Bill recalls between sets at the Opry on Aug. 8. "I said, 'Sure, I would!' And, golly, he gave me a guitar, so it was very special to me from the beginning."

Unfortunately, for reasons long since forgotten, Bill and his guitar were eventually separated. "If it wasn't stolen from me, all I can think is that I probably donated it to a museum somewhere," he reflects. "And who knows what happened to it after that?"

Happily, we know where it eventually wound up.

Not long ago, at Bell Road Pawn in Phoenix, co-owner Mike Grauer

looked up as someone came through the front door, a guitar case in hand. "He said, 'Do you pawn high-end guitars?'" Mike recalls, sitting with his wife, Wendy, in Bill's Opry dressing room. "I went online, looked up Grammer Guitars and figured about a thousand dollars would be good.

"That was the first, last and only time I saw that guy," Mike continues.

By then, the Grauers had noticed something inside the instrument—a note, written in calligraphy, identifying Bill Anderson as its owner. "So Mike went on YouTube and found a clip of Mr. Anderson on *The Johnny Cash Show*, playing what looked like this guitar," Wendy said. "But



The owner of Bell Road Pawn shop, Mike Grauer, returned Bill's long lost guitar to him on the Opry stage.



(Above) Bill performed "Guitar Song" with co-writer Jamey Johnson after the guitar was returned; (below) Bill posing with Mike Grauer and wife Wendy; (below right) Bill performing with his guitar on *The Johnny Cash Show* alongside Jan Howard in 1971.



we weren't certain . . . so I emailed Mr. Anderson's secretary and asked if she could pass along our photos of the guitar," Mike continues. "Shortly after that, Mr. Anderson responded to me personally and said, 'That's it!'"

"Now, I didn't know Mike," Bill cuts in. "So when he said he ran a pawn shop, I'm thinking, 'Well, he's in the business to make money. He's going to tell me he'll gladly let me have the guitar for \$25,000.' But instead he said that he and his wife were having their fifth wedding anniversary, and all they wanted was to come to Nashville to present me with the guitar in person. And it all just fell into place."

Bill arranged tickets and ac-

commodations for the couple, who showed up in Nashville on Friday, Aug. 7. The next night, live on the Opry, they brought the guitar on-stage and handed it to Bill, who strapped it on for the first time in half a century. He strummed it a few times, a smile creasing his face as the audience applauded.

Then what? For Bill, the next step was obvious: He introduced Jamey Johnson, and they launched into a tune they'd written together eight years before. "The Guitar Song" opens with lyrics that were almost eerily prescient: *I'm just a guitar in the pawn shop on the corner / And I'm waiting for someone to play me*

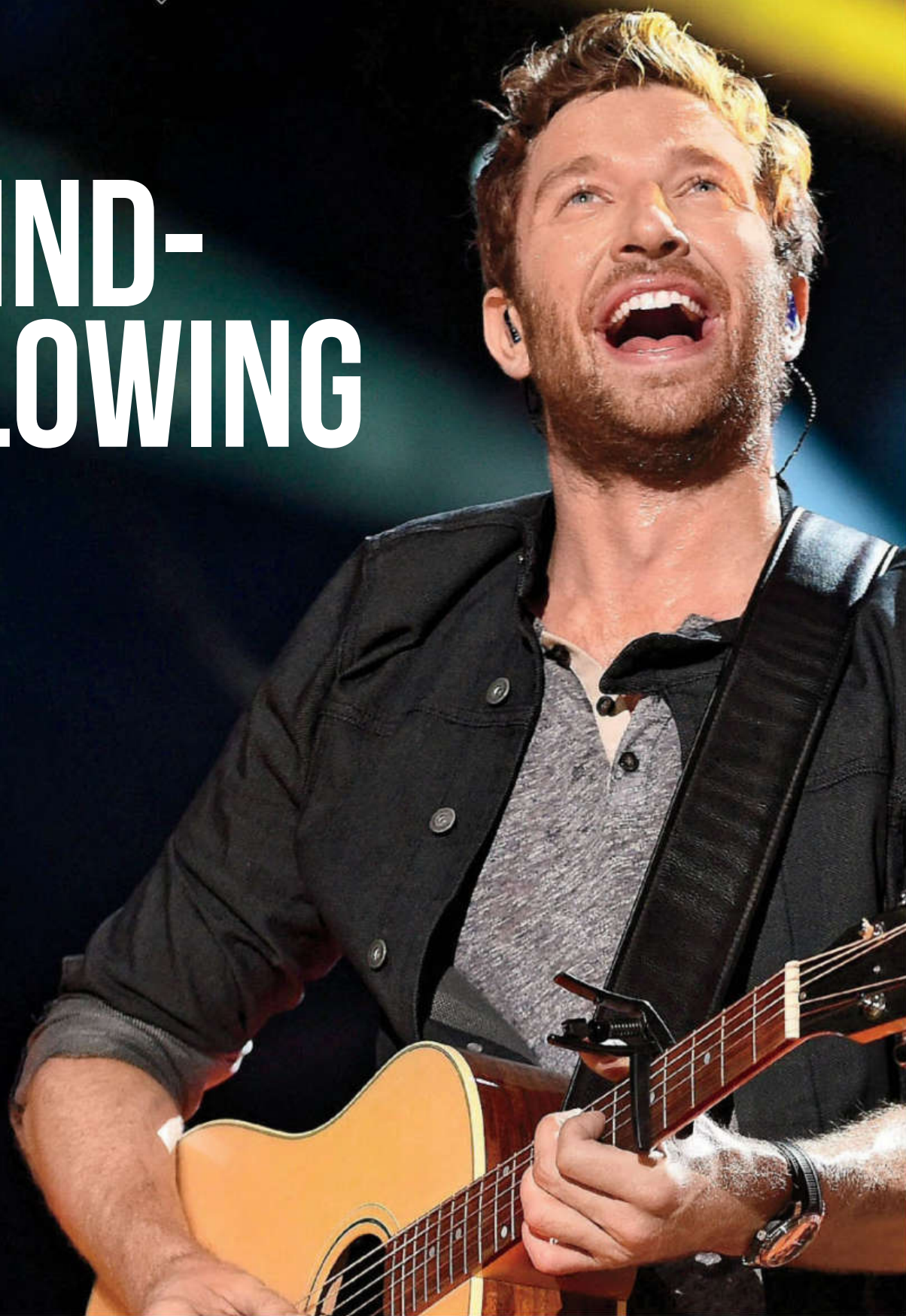
now and then . . . I've done some shows with Haggard back in 1967 / Now I'm dying for someone to play me back home.

The song's prophecy came true that night on the Opry stage, but the emotion behind it was left unspoken until afterwards, as Bill and the Grauers reflected backstage.

"You read so many things that are negative and bad in the news today," Bill muses. "When somebody is so kind and so good to want this guitar to come back to the man it was made for and who owned it so long ago, that's a wonderful story. I'll never be able to thank Mike and Wendy enough."

BOB DOERSCHUK

MIND- BLOWING





Brett by AdMedia/Corbis; GB by Kar Wa ter/Getty Images; Gian Franco by Chad Buchanan/Getty Images; Heather courtesy MSO PR; Ross courtesy Ross Copperman

The always-energetic Brett Eldredge can be pretty unpredictable onstage. Get him into a writing room and the same thing applies.

"Brett just comes in with this energy," says friend, co-writer and producer Ross Copperman. "He'll come in beating on the walls and taking staplers and slamming them into things to make beats out of them. I'll just put a microphone in front of his mouth and he'll sing a solo. He is such a talented artist."

When Brett, Ross and Heather Morgan teamed up to co-write again following their chart-topper, "Beat of the Music," in 2013, Ross knew he needed to be prepared to hit the ground running the minute he stepped into the room. As it turned out, Brett came in with a "crazy groove" that Ross immediately captured on his computer.

"Brett kind of verbalized it to me, and then I sat there with my laptop and tried to make it come to life," recalls Ross. "I was trying to find the right instrument for it."

Not only did Brett have the general idea for the musical direction of their song, but also the subject. "He had this crush on a girl, and he just couldn't sleep," notes Ross. "He was really into her, and he was up at night because she was driving him crazy."

As Brett opened up about this girl that was making him crazy, the song began to take shape in a matter of minutes. "Brett wanted to tap into that and do the whole straitjacket thing," says Ross. "He just had such great visuals to work with, so we just went for it."

With their hook of "Lose My Mind," the three writers found themselves leaning toward another hit song with a similar concept—Gnarls Barkley's "Crazy"—when they tapped into the second verse. After they settled on the line *you make me crazy, and I kind of like it*, Ross, Brett and Heather had their

"LOSE MY MIND"

BRETT ELDRIDGE

WRITERS: Brett Eldredge, Ross Copperman, Brian Burton, Gian Franco Reverberi, Thomas Callaway, Heather Morgan,



Ross Copperman



Brian Burton



Gian Franco
Reverberi



CeeLo Green



MORE MORGAN

In addition to co-writing Brett's "Lose My Mind" and "Beat of the Music," **HEATHER MORGAN** has penned songs for many other artists, including Keith Urban, Sara Evans, Lauren Alaina, Trisha Yearwood, Eli Young Band, Billy Ray Cyrus, Jennette McCurdy, Joey Hyde, Mallory Hope, Kelleigh Bannen, Jypsi, Randy Rogers Band and Ashley Gearing, among others.

concerns that maybe it was a little too similar. "So, we just made CeeLo [Green] and [those guys] writers on the song so we didn't get sued," Ross explains, laughing.

Once their song was finished, "Lose My Mind" was just what Brett was hoping to record for his second studio album, *Illinois*. The track was released as the lead single from the project, landing Brett another Top 10 single after only a few months on the charts.

"I am so proud of that track," says Ross as he reflects on the song. "I'm just stoked that it's a single where people get to hear it."

ALANNA CONAWAY

The week of Sept. 12, 2015

TOP 25 BILLBOARD ALBUMS

TW	LW	TITLE / ARTIST
1	1	KILL THE LIGHTS LUKE BRYAN
2	—	WILD ONES KIP MOORE
3	2	ELVIS FOREVER ELVIS PRESLEY
4	3	MONTEVALLO SAM HUNT
5	4	JEKYLL + HYDE ZAC BROWN BAND
6	6	THE OUTSIDERS ERIC CHURCH
7	10	ANYTHING GOES FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE
8	7	ANGELS AND ALCOHOL ALAN JACKSON
9	9	PAIN KILLER LITTLE BIG TOWN
10	12	JUST AS I AM BRANTLEY GILBERT
11	8	SOMETHING MORE THAN FREE JASON ISBELL
12	11	OLD BOOTS, NEW DIRT JASON ALDEAN
13	15	CRASH MY PARTY LUKE BRYAN
14	16	PAGEANT MATERIAL KACEY MUSGRAVES
15	13	NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL COUNTRY, VOLUME 8 • VARIOUS ARTISTS
16	14	MICHAEL RAY MICHAEL RAY
17	17	GREATEST HITS SO FAR ... ZAC BROWN BAND
18	22	THE BIG REVIVAL KENNY CHESNEY
19	29	SOUTHERNALITY A THOUSAND HORSES
20	18	IGNITE THE NIGHT CHASE RICE
21	5	HOME PAT GREEN
22	27	THE FIRST TIME KELSEA BALLERINI
23	21	COLE SWINDELL COLE SWINDELL
24	19	DJANGO AND JIMMIE WILLIE NELSON & MERLE HAGGARD
25	31	TRAVELLER CHRIS STAPLETON

TOP 25 BILLBOARD SINGLES

TW	LW	TITLE / ARTIST
1	2	HOUSE PARTY SAM HUNT
2	3	HELL OF A NIGHT DUSTIN LYNCH
3	4	CRASH AND BURN THOMAS RHETT
4	5	BUY ME A BOAT CHRIS JANSON
5	6	JOHN COUGAR, JOHN DEERE, JOHN 3:16 • KEITH URBAN
6	1	YOUNG & CRAZY FRANKIE BALLARD
7	8	LOSE MY MIND BRETT ELDREDGE
8	9	SAVE IT FOR A RAINY DAY KENNY CHESNEY
9	12	FLY MADDIE & TAE
10	14	ANYTHING GOES FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE
11	11	LIKE A WRECKING BALL ERIC CHURCH
12	13	GONNA WANNA TONIGHT CHASE RICE
13	16	STRIP IT DOWN LUKE BRYAN
14	15	LET ME SEE YA GIRL COLE SWINDELL
15	7	LOVING YOU EASY ZAC BROWN BAND
16	17	BREAK UP WITH HIM OLD DOMINION
17	18	NOTHIN' LIKE YOU DAN + SHAY
18	22	GONNA BLAKE SHELTON
19	18	REAL LIFE JAKE OWEN
20	20	LONG STRETCH OF LOVE LADY ANTEBELLUM
21	21	I'M TO BLAME KIP MOORE
22	24	SMOKE BREAK CARRIE UNDERWOOD
23	23	BURNING HOUSE CAM
24	25	I'M COMIN' OVER CHRIS YOUNG
25	25	RUN AWAY WITH YOU BIG & RICH

TOP 10 AMERICANA AIRPLAY

TW	LW	TITLE / ARTIST
1	1	SOMETHING MORE THAN FREE JASON ISBELL
2	2	PAGEANT MATERIAL KACEY MUSGRAVES
3	4	WATKINS FAMILY HOUR WATKINS FAMILY HOUR
4	5	DIDN'T IT RAIN AMY HELM
5	3	STILL RICHARD THOMPSON
6	8	BITTERSWEET KASEY CHAMBERS
7	6	THE BLADE ASHLEY MONROE
8	9	CALL ME INSANE DALE WATSON
9	10	ASHES & DUST WARREN HAYNES FEAT. RAILROAD EARTH
10	6	THE TRAVELING KIND EMMYLOU HARRIS & RODNEY CROWELL

SOURCE: AMERICANA AIRPLAY CHART

rdio TOP 5 TRENDING COUNTRY SONGS*

TW	TITLE / ARTIST
1	TAKE YOUR TIME SAM HUNT
2	STRIP IT DOWN LUKE BRYAN
3	WHAT DO YOU WANT JERROD NIEMANN
4	CRUISE FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE
5	BURNING HOUSE CAM

TOP 5 TRENDING COUNTRY/AMERICANA/SOUTHERN ALBUMS*

TW	TITLE / ARTIST
1	START HERE MADDIE & TAE
2	WILD ONES KIP MOORE
3	GOLDEN ROAD KEITH URBAN
4	NUMBER ONE HITS TIM MCGRAW
5	JUDGE JERROD & THE HUNG JURY JERROD NIEMANN

*DATA FROM AUG. 31, 2015

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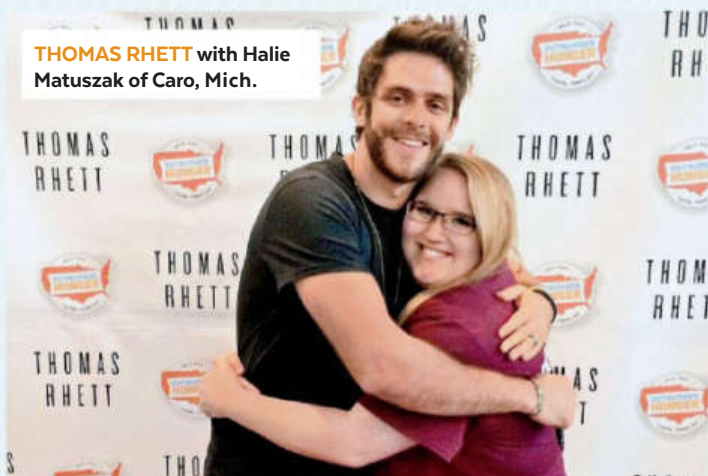
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Michael Long of Canton, Mich., with **NATALIE STOVALL**



RASCAL FLATTS with Emily Duc of Plano, Texas



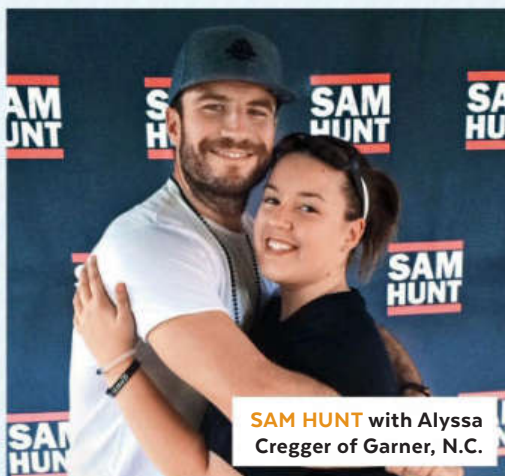
THOMAS RHETT with Halie Matuszak of Caro, Mich.



Debbie Murray of Sudbury, Mass., with the late **LYNN ANDERSON**



LEE BRICE with Ryan Wasko of Forty Fort, Pa.



SAM HUNT with Alyssa Cregger of Garner, N.C.

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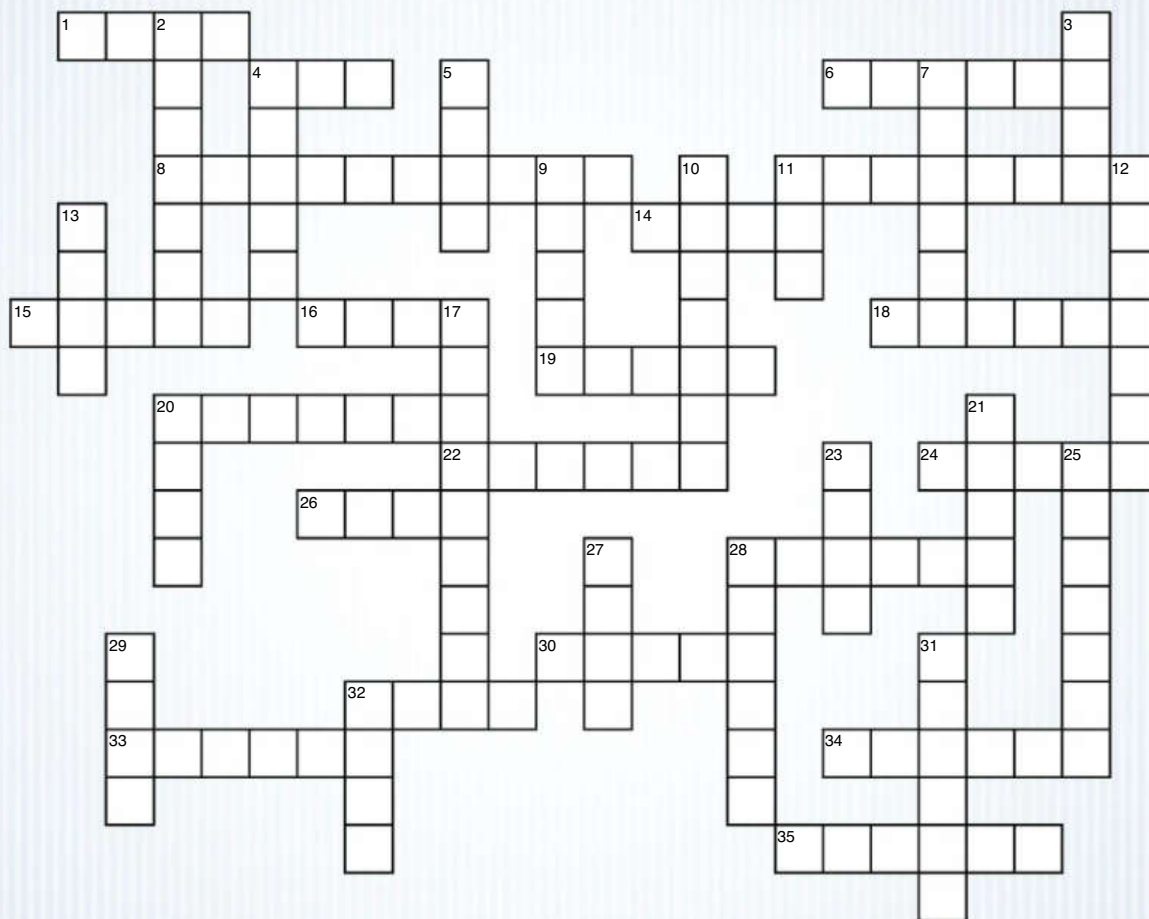
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by John Reiman



ACROSS

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- 4** Chris Janson's "_____ Me a Boat"
- 6** "Living in the Promiseland" singer
- 8** Amy Schumer/Bill Hader movie
- 11** Ernest Hemingway's A _____ to Arms
- 14** _____ tale
- 15** _____ fund
- 16** "Cathy's Clown" singer
- 18** Lynn Anderson's "How Can I _____ You"
- 19** Luke Bryan's "_____ It Down"
- 20** Allison and Shelby
- 22** Ronnie Dunn's "Ain't No _____ in Texas"
- 24** Holiest city in Islam
- 26** Chris Young's I'm Coming _____ Tour
- 28** K.T. Oslin's "Come Next _____"
- 30** Opposite of #26 Across
- 32** Phil Vassar's "In a _____ Love"
- 33** Mt. McKinley is here
- 34** "Have You Forgotten?" singer
- 35** Capital of Minnesota

DOWN

- 2** "Sugar" singer
- 3** "Wink" singer
- 4** "Gonna" singer
- 5** Merle Haggard's "Grandma _____"
- 7** "I May Hate Myself in the Morning" singer
- 9** "Tomorrow" singer
- 10** *Blacked Out* artists Moonshine _____
- 11** Maddie & Tae's "_____"
- 12** "Get Out of My Head and Back in My Bed" singer
- 13** New artist Courtney _____
- 17** Adelaide is here
- 20** Alabama's "Give Me One More _____"
- 21** *Ricki and the Flash* actress
- 23** Jerrod Niemann's "What Do You _____"
- 25** Kacey Musgraves' "Dime Store _____"
- 27** Martina McBride's "A Broken _____"
- 28** 2016 Democratic presidential candidate _____ O'Malley
- 29** Tim McGraw's "Something Like _____"
- 31** 2015 Master's and U.S. Open champ Spieth
- 32** 2016 Republican presidential candidate _____ Paul

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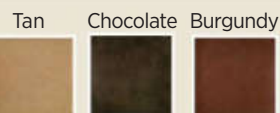
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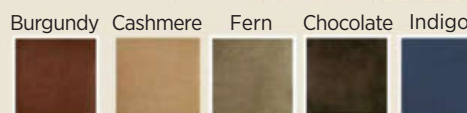


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a little help from
our friends.*



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"When I go to a concert, I'm not that fun to be there with because I'm on my phone the whole time taking notes. I'm loving it. I'm having a blast. But I'm not the guy singing and dancing. I'm there to learn."

DUSTIN LYNCH

SAM I AM

In addition to all of the "Firsts" about **SAM HUNT** on page 24, we think he's the first country artist to regularly cover a Drake song in his sets. Sam frequently worked the rapper's "Marvin's Room" into his own tune, "Single for Summer," during his Lipstick Graffiti Tour.

TASTES LIKE CHICKEN

In 1984, **JOHNNY CASH** felt marginalized by his record label, Columbia, so he flipped them the proverbial bird by intentionally recording the atrocious song "Chicken in Black," a ridiculously uncomfortable saga about a three-way brain transplant between Johnny, a dead bank robber and a chicken. Johnny's scheme worked—the flustered label dropped him in 1986.

"The whole music industry in general can eat you up and spit you out pretty quickly, so if you can bounce back from the rejection and criticism, then you can get through anything."

CASSADEE POPE



ELI YOUNG BAND BY THE NUMBERS

GRAMMY NOMINATIONS **1**

3 BILLBOARD NO. 1 HITS

EPs **2**

4 BAND MEMBERS

5 Studio Albums



MIND OVER MATTER

BRETT ELDREDGE's "Lose My Mind" is currently No. 7 on *Billboard's* Country Airplay Chart, so it doesn't have far to climb to reach No. 1 like these other five "mindful" country tunes.

"A Satisfied Mind"
PORTER WAGONER, 1955

"If You Ever Change Your Mind"
CRYSTAL GAYLE, 1980

"Always on My Mind"
WILLIE NELSON, 1982

"Nobody in His Right Mind Would've Left Her"
GEORGE STRAIT, 1986

"Keep Me in Mind"
ZAC BROWN BAND, 2011

CROSSWORD SOLUTION (SEE PAGE 60)





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